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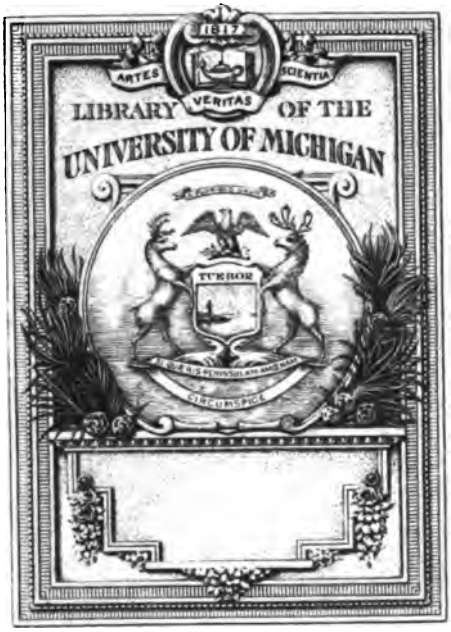
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THE MASTERPIECES OF MODERN DRAMA

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THE MASTERPIECES OF MODERN DRAMA

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN

Abridged in Narrative, with Dialogue of the Great Scenes

BY
JOHN ALEXANDER PIERCE
FORMERLY WITH THE NEW YORK "SUN"

PREFACED WITH A CRITICAL ESSAY
BY
BRANDER MATTHEWS
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
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1915

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CONTENTS

PART I

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION By Brander Matthews	xiii
BECKET By Alfred Lord Tennyson	3
LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN By Oscar Wilde	21
THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY By Sir Arthur Wing Pinero	45
THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST By Oscar Wilde	67
MICHAEL AND HIS LOST ANGEL By Henry Arthur Jones	84
THE LIARS By Henry Arthur Jones	103
THE TYRANNY OF TEARS By C. Haddon Chambers	125
[illegible]RD By Stephen Phillips	148
YOU NEVER CAN TELL By Bernard Shaw	170
WHEN WE WERE TWENTY-ONE By H. V. Esmond	203

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THE ADMIRABLE CHRICHTON 2
By Sir James M. Barrie

RIDERS TO THE SEA. 244
By J. M. Synge

CÆSAR AND CLEOPATRA 251
By Bernard Shaw

THE VOYSEY INHERITANCE 277
By Granville Barker

THE THUNDERBOLT. 300
By Sir Arthur Wing Pinero

PART II

JUSTICE 3
By John Galsworthy

DISRAELI 22
By Louis N. Parker

RUTHERFORD & SON 41
By Githa Sowerby

SHENANDOAH 59
By Bronson Howard

SECRET SERVICE 81
By William Gillette

THE MOTH AND THE FLAME 100
By Clyde Fitch

STRONGHEART 117
By William C. de Mille

THE TRUTH 140
By Clyde Fitch

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PAGE

THE NEW YORK IDEA 162
By Langdon Mitchell

THE GREAT DIVIDE 189
By William Vaughn Moody

THE WITCHING HOUR 205
By Augustus Thomas

PAID IN FULL 223
By Eugene Walter

THE SCARECROW, OR THE GLASS OF TRUTH . . 239
By Percy MacKaye

THE RETURN OF PETER GRIMM 253
By David Belasco

AS A MAN THINKS 267
By Augustus Thomas

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PART I

"The Drama as Teacher" . . . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

Henry Irving as "Becket". 12

P. deCordoba and Margaret Anglin in "Lady Windermere's Fan" 40

William Faversham as Algernon in "The Importance of Being Earnest". 78

John Drew as Mr. Parbury, Laura Hope Crews as Mrs. Parbury, and Mary Boland as Miss Woodward in "Tyranny of Tears" 134

William Faversham as Herod and Julie Opp as Mariamne in "Herod" 152

Arnold Daly as Mr. Valentine in "You Never Can Tell" 194

Nat Goodwin as Dick Carewe and Maxine Elliott as Phyllis Ericson in "When We Were Twenty-one" 216

Forbes-Robertson as Cæsar and Gertrude Elliott as Cleopatra in "Cæsar and Cleopatra" . . . 268

A. E. Anson as Thaddeus and Thais Lawton as Phyllis in "The Thunderbolt" 308

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ILLUSTRATIONS

PART II

FACING PAGE

William Gillette as Captain Thorne in "Secret Service" 96

Henry Miller as Stephen Ghent, and Margaret Anglin as Ruth Jordan in "The Great Divide" 194

John Mason as Jack Brookfield in "The Witching Hour" 218

Tully Marshall as Joe Brooks, and Phil Sheridan as Captain Williams in "Paid in Full" 226

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INTRODUCTION

I

Now that the nineteenth century has so far receded from us that we can begin to survey it in a perspective not distorted by the prejudices which always mar our vision of the immediate present, we are at last able to sum up its efforts and its achievements in the several arts. When we consider the literature of the past hundred years we cannot fail to remark upon the extraordinary and unprecedented vogue of prose-fiction, beginning with the startling success of the Waverly novels of Scott in England in the first quarter of the century; stimulated by the indefatigable curiosity which sustains the Human Comedy of Balzac in France in the mid-years; and ennobled by the lofty veracity of Tolstoy's later studies of human struggles in Russia in the final decades. Poets there were in all the modern literatures, poets of high ambition and of genuine inspiration as well as sincere aspiration; historians and biographers, critics and essayists, there were in abundance; and yet the novelists outnumbered the others and seemed at times almost to outshine them. Indeed, the attraction of fiction was so potent that poets laid aside their singing robes to tell tales in humble prose; and historians, critics, and essayists now and again deserted their own fields to adventure themselves as novelists.

It is perhaps more or less in consequence of this inrushing of writers who were not primarily storytellers that the modern novel is so many sided and so uncertain of its own ultimate goal. The novelist to-day feels at liberty to compete with the historian in dealing with the manners and customs of the past; he holds himself at liberty to digress from his theme and to become discursive quite in the manner of the essayist; he does not hesitate to put into his pages the lyric cry, which has been the special privilege of

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the poet; and he has despoiled the drama of its monopoly of dealing with the vital struggles of a soul at war with the words of fate. In other words, the modern novel is a chameleon, changing color as you gaze on it and taking on at will the semblance of history or poetry or drama. It is from the play that the story has made its most frequent and the most abundant borrowings; and it was from among the potential playwrights that novelists were most obviously recruited in mid-years of the nineteenth century.

The necessary result of this was that as prose-fiction flourished the drama dwindled. As the novel became more and more popular and more and more profitable, many of the writers intended by nature to be playwrights were tempted away to swell the ranks of the novelists. It is not too much to say that in the middle of the nineteenth century French was the only one of the leading literatures in which prose-fiction had not ousted the drama from its former position of proud preëminence; and even in France there was no dramatist of the force and the fecundity of Balzac. Even in France while Augier and the younger Dumas, Meilhac and Halévy, Becque and Labiche were still writing for the stage, Flaubert and the Goncourts and Daudet were emboldened to believe that the drama was an outworn form, incapable of carrying the message of a more cultivated and a more complicated civilization. And outside of France, in German literature and Italian, in English literature in both of its branches, British and American, the drama had almost ceased to be a competitor of prose-fiction. In these literatures it seemed as though a divorce had been proclaimed between literature and the drama; and in English as in German and in Italian most of the plays which were actable were unreadable and most of the plays which were readable were unactable.

Only in France was the art of the playwright held in honor; and only in France was there a constant production of plays that were both actable and readable. As it happened, this richness of French literature tended to increase the poverty of the drama in other languages because the absence of international stageright permitted the Italian and the German managers, the British and the American, to take French pieces without payment, so that their theatres were filled with mangled and misleading adapta-

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tions of the works of the leading French playwrights. Thus the native dramatists of Germany and Italy, Great Britain and the United States were discouraged by being forced to vend their wares in competition with stolen goods. It is no wonder that many of them renounced the stage and turned to storytelling, which is always much easier and which for the moment was far more remunerative. Charles Reade, for one, used to maintain that he was a dramatist by native gift, compelled to practise as a novelist because of bad laws.

Yet in all these middle years of the nineteenth century while the drama was enfeebled, while there were scarcely any playwrights dealing simply and sincerely with the life of their own people in their own time and in their own country, the theatre itself was flourishing and there were actors of rich endowment and of high accomplishment. But these prominent performers were rarely eager for new plays; in fact, most of them preferred the old established favorites in which they could compete with the reputation of their predecessors. Of John Philip Kemble it was said that he believed that all the good plays had been written. Macready did bring out pieces written for him by Knowles and by Bulwer-Lytton; and he was amply rewarded for his courage; and Edwin Forrest sought to perform a like service for the drama on this side of the Atlantic. But Edmund Kean and Charles Kean, Junius Brutus Booth and Edwin Booth, Henry Irving and Joseph Jefferson, were content, for the most part, with the plays which had pleased earlier generations of playgoers; and these shrank from the risk of failure in untried novelties.

Then toward the end of the third quarter of the nineteenth century there began to be signs of a change. First of all, there was a slackening in the dramatic productivity of France, which supplied a lessening number of plays available for export. Second, there was a general recognition of the right of a dramatist to control his pieces, not only in his own country, but in all countries; and the granting of international stage-right instantly removed the premium of cheapness which had filled our theatres with transmogrified French pieces. Thirdly, the novel seemed for a while to have exerted its full strength and to be too weary for further advance. Fourthly and finally, came the

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discovery of the value of Ibsen's social-dramas, a discovery which revealed that the drama was not an outworn form unfit to carry a message to our complicated civilization.

So it came about that in the final quarter of the nineteenth century the divorce between literature and the drama was annulled. In German and Italian and English an increasing proportion of plays which were actable disclosed themselves as also readable; and the theatres of these languages began to lend to and to borrow from one another. Sarah Bernhardt appeared in the German "Madga" and Duse in the British "Second Mrs. Tanqueray"; Mrs. Fiske appeared in the Norwegian "Hedda Gabler" and George Arliss in the Hungarian "Devil." Bronson Howard's "Saratoga" was acted in Berlin; Gillette's "Secret Service" was acted in Paris; and Clyde Fitch's "Truth" was acted in Rome. The play became as popular and as profitable as the novel; and so it was that instead of potential playwrights becoming novelists the novelists themselves were tempted to turn dramatists—Barrie and Shaw and Galsworthy in Great Britain, Howells and James in the United States, Hervieu in France, Sudermann in Germany, and d'Annunzio in Italy. At the end of the nineteenth century the revival of the drama was no longer a hope or a hypothesis; it was an irrefragible fact, as indisputable in Hungary as in Austria, in the United States as in Great Britain. The drama had no longer any need or any desire to apologize for itself. It challenged the supremacy of the novel; and as the more difficult art, it won from the ranks of the writers of prose-fiction not a few of those who were most keenly interested in art for its own sake.

II

This revival of the drama in all the leading modern literatures, evident enough in the final decades of the nineteenth century and becoming more and more indisputable in the earlier decades of the twentieth century, could not have come about at a more fortunate moment, because it was coincident with a remarkable modification in the actual theatre and in the circumstances of actual performance—a modification which has profoundly influenced the methods of the contemporary drama and of which the full

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results have not yet been made manifest. The dramatist must conceive his dramas and shape them in accord with the conditions of the playhouse in which they are to be performed. As he has never written his plays for posterity but always for his contemporaries, so he has always adjusted these plays to the theatre of his own time and his own country. This is as true of Sophocles and Shakespeare and Molière, as it is of Beaumarchais and Sheridan, of Victor Hugo and Ibsen.

The dramatic poet plans his plays for performance, by actors, in a theatre and before an audience; and consciously or unconsciously he fits them to the capability of the actors of his own time and his own country, to the shape and size and conditions of the theatres of his own time and his own country, and to the opinions and the prejudices of the audiences of his own time and his own country. The influence of the audiences is exerted only upon the content of his plays, upon what he will put into them, upon the themes he will treat; and the influence of the theatre is exerted upon the form of his plays, upon his method of telling his story on the stage. Any important change in the conditions of the theatre will compel the playwright to modify his method, to adapt his processes to these new conditions, to adjust his technic to the circumstances of performance to which the playgoers of his own time and his own country are accustomed.

Now, while the drama was awakening itself from its lethargic sleep, the theatre was undergoing a transformation which may have seemed to careless observers slight and unimportant, but which has already had obvious and far-reaching effects. This transformation of the theatre and the resulting modification of the methods of the dramatist is due to the development of the picture-frame stage out of the apron stage, which had earlier been evolved from the platform stage. Shakespeare wrote his plays for a bare platform, which was devoid of scenery (although supplied with "properties" of all sorts) and which jutted out into the yard, wherein the spectators stood. Two centuries later Sheridan wrote his plays for a stage which curved forward boldly, in what was called the "apron," on which the actors advanced to perform all the more significant incidents, because it was only out on the apron that suffi-

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cient illumination could be secured to enable the spectator to see their faces. There was scenery, far behind on the stage itself, but this served mainly as a background from which the performers could come forward on the projecting apron, far beyond the curtain. On the apron stage, as on the earlier platform stage, the actors were surrounded on three sides by the audience; and they were in such close proximity to the spectator that it was natural enough for them to make speeches directly to him and to indulge in confidential soliloquies.

With the invention of more satisfactory appliances for lighting—the calcium light and the electric light—it became possible to illuminate the whole stage; and the projecting apron ceased to be a necessity. So it was cut away and the footlights receded to the curtain, which now rises and falls in a picture frame. The actors are no longer surrounded on three sides by the audience; they are no longer in close proximity to the spectators; and the characters are no longer tempted to reveal their souls and to set forth their schemes in confidential soliloquies addressed directly to the playgoers massed all around them. To talk at the audience has been discovered to endanger the plausibility of the performance, because it forced the actor to step "out of the picture." And the picture disclosed within the picture frame is no longer the vague background acceptable enough on the apron stage; it has become a reproduction of the fit habitation of the character whose home it purported to represent. Here the drama has been influenced by prose-fiction; Scott first and then Balzac had taught us how a character could be revealed in a characteristic environment. It was from the novel that the realistic movement spread to the play; and it is only on the picture-frame stage that it is possible to present the persons of the drama in their appropriate surroundings.

Furthermore, as this characteristic environment is often indicated by a complex stage-setting, with realistic scenery, realistic furniture, and realistic properties, it takes more time for its proper preparation than was needed for the more primitive scenery which supplied a background satisfactory enough on the apron stage, the dramatist has discovered the advisability of not changing the scenery during an act, unless there was some unusual advantage to be

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gained. Just as the adoption of the picture frame forced the abandonment of the soliloquy, so the adoption of the single set to the act compelled a closer compacting of the story and imposed on the playwright a severer economy of construction. In fact, the changes in the conditions of performance necessarily brought about various changes in the methods of the playwright and forced him to solve novel problems of technic.

The transformation of the apron stage of the end of the eighteenth century into the picture-frame stage of the beginning of the twentieth century, and the resulting modification of the methods of playmaking can now be observed in the theatres of all the leading cities of the world; a modern type of playhouse has been slowly evolved in consequence of international borrowings, every country availing itself speedily of the inventions and improvements of every other country. It is to this twentieth-century type of theatre that the twentieth-century playwright adjusts his play, no matter what his nationality. Plays are now immediately transportable from one language to another; and the dramatists of every modern language are composing their plays in accordance with the same set of principles. So far as its structure is concerned, there is no difference between a German play and a Hungarian, or between an American and an Italian. The craftsmanship may be more dexterous in the work of the French dramatists, but they are working in accord with a body of artistic doctrine accepted also by the dramatists of every other modern language.

But while the external form of the contemporary drama does not vary from tongue to tongue, the internal content retains the full flavor of its author's nationality. The skeleton of a comedy by Hervieu may resemble the skeleton of a comedy by Barrie, but the spirit of the former is as indisputably Gallic as the spirit of the latter is undeniably British. So far as their technic is concerned, the plays of Clyde Fitch and Herman Bahr, of Echegaray and d'Annunzio are more or less identical; but there the resemblance ceases and each of these authors reveals his racial point of view in his choice of theme, in his handling of situation, and in his treatment of character. The drama of the twentieth century is cosmopolitan in its acceptance of a unified

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theory of the theatre; but it is intensely national and therefore immensely varied in its divergent outlook upon life. Here the art of the modern dramatist is seen to resemble the art of the modern writer of short stories. In form, in method, in technic, the short stories of Poe and Bret Harte and O. Henry, of Stevenson and Kipling, of Maupassant and Daudet, of Turgenef and Sacher-Masach, are surprisingly alike; while in content, in flavor, in aroma, every one of these writers discloses instantly that he is solidly rooted in the soil of his nativity.

III

It is partly because the technic of the short story is more difficult than that of the more loosely knit novel that so many of our later writers of fiction have been tempted to wrestle with the exigencies of the briefer form; and it is partly because in like manner the technic of the drama demands a sterner effort that so many of our later novelists have sought to win success also on the stage. A true artist joys in overcoming obstacles and in turning stumbling-blocks into stepping-stones. This desire of the ardent artist to wrestle with technical problems is one reason why the sonnet with its rigid scheme of rimes has always been alluring to poets. This is one reason why we may expect the drama to attract to itself the more richly endowed storytellers and why we have a right to hope that the present rivalry between the drama and prose-fiction will become more acute.

(This much at least is certain now, that in all the more important modern literatures the drama has been reborn. No one who is interested in understanding his fellowman in his own country and in other countries can afford to neglect the plays of our time. It is a chief function of literature to enable us to see ourselves first of all—and this we can do best in the novels and the plays of our fellow-countrymen. Almost equally important are the novels and plays written in foreign tongues which enable us to see foreigners as they see themselves and which help us therefore to that more intimate understanding of alien peoples that makes for international comity.)

As plays, whether native or foreign, are composed spe-

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cifically for performance on the stage, and as they therefore display their full power and render up their full meaning only when they are acted, it is best always to see them in the theatre whenever this is possible. But unfortunately it is not always possible. Even in the largest cities many of the most interesting plays are visible in the playhouse only infrequently; and in the smaller towns and in the remoter rural districts the opportunities of seeing them are even more limited. In default of the possibility of beholding them in the theatre we shall have, perforce, to content ourselves with the less satisfactory perusal in the library. We shall have to recover the lost art of reading plays as easily and as effectively as we read novels. We shall have to train ourselves to interpret the stage directions of the dramatist and to learn as best we can to visualize the actual performance we are deprived of.

In the eighteenth century and even in the earlier years of the nineteenth century, before the overwhelming popularity of the Waverly novels led to the enormous expansion of prose-fiction and to the consequent decline of the English drama, plays were as freely read as novels. A successful comedy or tragedy went through edition after edition. Hazlitt dwelt on the delight of reading a comedy in which the cleverest things are said and the most amusing happen. But as the novel slowly but surely crowded out the play, the mass of readers became accustomed to the amplitude of description and to the superfluities of analysis in which the novelist was wont to indulge; and they came in time to find the bare dialogue of a play, supported only by sparse stage directions, a little too bare for comfortable perusal. They became too lazy to make the effort needed to picture the action for themselves. In other words, the art of reading a play was lost by the immense majority of those whose faculties were weakened by the often excessive amount of detail provided in the more leisurely and less-condensed narratives of the novelist.

To-day there is evidence that this lost art is being recovered, both in Great Britain and in the United States. There has been a constant succession of translations of the social dramas of Ibsen; and abundant English renderings of the more important pieces of other European dramatists have been published in the past score of years. The

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American or British reader who has only his own native language has been enabled to form his own opinion of the most significant plays of Rostand, d'Annunzio, Strindberg, Tchekof, and Hauptmann. The more ambitious of the playwrights of our own language have been encouraged to prepare their pieces for publication; the plays of Mr. Shaw and Mr. Galsworthy have been carried to hundreds of readers who have never had an opportunity to see anything by either of these British writers represented in the theatre. The Drama League of America has encouraged its members to peruse plays, and to this end it has issued carefully prepared and annotated lists.

(It is one of the objects of the series of volumes to which this paper serves as an introduction to aid in the acquisition of the art of reading a play. Half a hundred of the most important and most interesting pieces of the last half century have been chosen; and the story of each has been retold in the form of succinct narrative which from time to time gives place to the actual dialogue of the play itself. Thus the possessor of these volumes will be introduced to many masterpieces of the modern drama by an ingenious and enticing compromise between the unadorned dialogue of the stage play and the unbroken narrative of prose-fiction.)

BRANDER MATTHEWS.

Columbia University
in the City of New York.

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THE MASTERPIECES OF MODERN DRAMA

PART I

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BECKET

By Alfred Lord Tennyson

Arranged for the stage by Sir Henry Irving. First played in London at the Lyceum Theatre on February 6, 1893.

Argument: Henry II, King of England, makes Thomas Becket Archbishop of Canterbury, and Becket defends the Church against the encroachments of the king. The queen offers to support Becket if he will deliver into her hands her rival in the king's affections, but he refuses, and the king and barons attempt to break down Becket's opposition. Will Becket yield, or will the king gain his end by violent means?

In a castle in Normandy King Henry II of England is playing at chess with his chancellor, Thomas Becket.

Henry. So then our good Archbishop Theobald
Lies dying.

Becket. I am grieved to know as much.

Hen. But we must have a mightier man than he
For his successor.

Bec. Have you thought of one?

Hen. A cleric lately poison'd his own mother,
And being brought before the courts of the Church,
They but degraded him. I hope they whipt him.
I would have hang'd him.

Bec. It is your move.

Hen. Well—there. [*Moves.*]
The Church in the pell-mell of Stephen's time
Hath climb'd the throne and almost clutch'd the crown;
But by the royal customs of our realm

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The Church should hold her baronies of me,
Like other lords amenable to law.
I'll have them written down and made the law.
Bec. My liege, I move my bishop.
Hen. And if I live,
No man without my leave shall excommunicate
My tenants or my household.
Bec. Look to your king.
Hen. No man without my leave shall cross the seas
To set the Pope against me—I pray your pardon.
Bec. Well—will you move?
Hen. There. [*Moves.*]
Bec. Check—you move so wildly.
Hen. There then! [*Moves.*]
Bec. Why—there then, for you see my bishop
Hath brought your king to a standstill. You are beaten.
Hen. [*kicks over the board*]. Why, there then—down go bishop and king together.
I loathe being beaten; had I fixt my fancy
Upon the game I should have beaten thee,
But that was vagabond.

The king is also preoccupied with the fear that the queen would have the life of Rosamund De Clifford. Becket urges him to put Rosamund away, to shut her up in a cloister. How does Becket know he isn't wedded to her, the king asks. He would entrust her to Becket's care in England when he is away in Normandy or Anjou. He has built a secret bower in England, a nest in a bush. Showing Becket a chart, he points out this bower in the midst of a forest reached through two mazes, one of wood paths and the other of brickwork. Becket consents to take the lady from Anjou to the secret bower.

Hen. A moment! thou didst help me to my throne
In Theobald's time, and after by thy wisdom
Hast kept it firm from shaking; but now I,
For my realm's sake, myself must be the wizard
To raise that tempest which will set it trembling
Only to base it deeper. I will have
My young son Henry crown'd the King of England,
That so the Papal bolt may pass by England,
As seeming his, not mine, and fall abroad.
I'll have it done—and now.

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Bec. Surely too young
Even for this shadow of a crown; and tho'
I love him heartily, I can spy already
A strain of hard and headstrong in him. Say,
The queen should play his kingship against thine!
Hen. I will not think so, Thomas. Who shall crown him?
Canterbury is dying.
Bec. The next Canterbury.
Hen. And who shall he be, my friend Thomas? Who?
Bec. Name him; the Holy Father will confirm him.
Hen. [*lays his hand on* BECKET'S *shoulder*]. Here!
Bec. Mock me not. I am not even a monk.
Thy jest—no more. Why—look—is this a sleeve
For an archbishop?
Hen. But the arm within
Is Becket's, who hath beaten down my foes.
Bec. A soldier's, not a spiritual arm.
Hen. I lack a spiritual soldier, Thomas—
A man of this world and the next to boot.
Bec. There's Gilbert Foliot.
Hen. He! too thin, too thin.
Thou art the man to fill out the Church robe;
Your Foliot fasts and fawns too much for me.
Bec. Roger of York.
Hen. Roger is Roger of York.
King, Church, and State to him but foils wherein
To set that precious jewel, Roger of York.
No.
Bec. Sire, the business
Of thy whole kingdom waits me: let me go.
Hen. Answer me first.
Bec. Make *me* archbishop! Why, my liege, I know
Some three or four poor priests a thousand times
Fitter for this grand function. *Me* archbishop!
God's favour and king's favour might so clash
That thou and I—— That were a jest indeed!
Hen. Thou angerest me, man: I do not jest.

The queen enters. She catches sight of the chart on the table, and noticing that the king has upset the chessmen, thinks his mind was set upon other matters, love perhaps. She asks if his love for her has died from the honeymoon.

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Swearing that is not true, he takes hold of a cross on her neck, and expresses surprise at its beauty. She tells him to take it and wear it on his hard heart. Word is brought that the good archbishop is no more.

Becket, now archbishop, is talking with his friend, Herbert of Bosham, in his house in London. The people, he says, know their church is a tower of strength against the king and baronage. But Gilbert Foliot has raised the cry that Becket is not the man to be the primate.

Bec. Am I the man? That rang
Within my head last night, and when I slept
Methought I stood in Canterbury Minster,
And spake to the Lord God, and said,
"Henry the King hath been my friend, my brother,
And mine uplifter in this world, and chosen me
For this thy great archbishoprick, believing
That I should go against the Church with him,
And I shall go against him with the Church.
Am *I* the man?" And the Lord answer'd me,
"Thou art the man, and all the more the man."
And thereupon, methought, he drew toward me,
And smote me down upon the Minster floor,
I fell.

Herb. God make not thee, but thy foes, fall.

Bec. And yet I seem appall'd—on such a sudden
At such an eagle-height I stand and see
The rift that runs between me and the king.

Rosamund de Clifford enters and asks Becket to save her. She has been followed in the streets and is afraid some one may learn who she is. He has told her to remain in the house, and she has gone to another apartment, when Sir Reginald Fitz Urse, a knight of the king's household, enters. Fitz Urse is a friend of the queen and an enemy of Becket. He tells Becket it is important to him to know the name of a woman he has followed to the house. He tries to pass Becket and look into the next room, but Becket, telling him to go home and sleep off his wine, forces him to leave.

Becket determines to resign as chancellor, in spite of the king's wishes, and sends back the Great Seat of England to the king.

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In a street in Northampton leading to the castle, the retinue of the queen fall in with the retinue of Becket, and a fight begins which the queen and Becket quell. The queen proposes to Becket that they help each other; she, with the barons whom she can influence, will support Holy Church if he will grant her one small favor, a sight of that same chart which Henry gave him.

Bec. And to what end?

Eleanor. Look! I would move this wanton from his sight. And take the Church's danger on myself.

Bec. For which she should be duly grateful.

Elea. True!
Tho' she that binds the bond, herself should see
That kings are faithful to their marriage vow.

Bec. Ay, Madam, and queens also.

Elea. And queens also!
What is your drift?

Bec. My drift is to the castle,
Where I shall meet the barons and my king.

[*Exit.*

Several of the barons overtake the queen, and she tells them to stir up the king and set all on fire against Becket.

When the barons and leaders of the Church have assembled in the hall of Northampton Castle, Becket comes before them, summoned to sign the customs of the realm, and learns that the king, incensed because he has sent back the Great Seal, will not see him. Becket tells them that the so-called customs of the realm are mere clouds that come and go, whereas the customs of the Church are Peter's rock.

John of Oxford, president of the council, replies that the king has had the customs written down. He reads them one by one, and one by one Becket declares he will not sign them. The first is that if any cleric shall be accused of felony, the Church shall not protect him; the second, that the king shall receive the revenues of a vacant bishoprick until another bishop be appointed; third, that the election shall be held in the chapel royal; and fourth, that no cleric shall be suffered to cross the seas to appeal to the Pope without the license of the king.

This is only the beginning, but the barons can restrain

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themselves no longer. They spring up; and their swords clash as they draw them, commanding Becket to sign and obey. They await but the king's word to strike him dead. The bishops and legate of the Pope entreat Becket to sign, as do also the oldest of the Templars, a friend of his father, and the youngest of the Templars, asking Becket to look upon him as his son. At last Becket yields and puts his signature to the parchment, then turning to his friend Herbert of Bosham he asks if he has betrayed the Church. He says he will have the paper back and blot out his name; the cardinals have taken Henry's gold. He sees it now, and Rome is venal to rottenness. When the paper has passed about the council Becket will not seal. He goes out with Herbert of Bosham. The king enters.

Hen. Where's Thomas? hath he sign'd? show me the papers!
Sign'd and not seal'd! How's that?

John of Oxford. He would not seal.
And when he signed, he sat down there and groan'd,
"False to myself! It is the will of God!"

Hen. God's will be what it will, the man shall seal,
Or I will seal his doom. My burgher's son—
Nay, if I cannot break him as the prelate,
I'll crush him as the subject. Send for him back. [*Sits on his throne.*]
Barons and bishops of our realm of England,
After the nineteen winters of King Stephen—
A reign which was no reign—I came, your King!
And the event—our fallows till'd,
Much corn, repeopled towns, a realm again.
And, looking thro' my reign, I found a hundred ghastly murders done
By men, the scum and offal of the Church;
Then, glancing thro' the story of this realm,
I came on certain wholesome usages,
Lost in desuetude, of my grandsire's day,
Good royal customs—had them written fair
For John of Oxford here to read to you.

Hilary, Bishop of Chichester, entering, reports that Becket is without, surrounded by a crowd of worshippers, and holding his cross before him as one that puts himself in sanctuary.

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Hen. His Cross!

Roger of York. His cross! I'll front him, cross to cross.

[*Exit* ROGER OF YORK.

Hen. His cross! it is the traitor that imputes
Treachery to his king!
It is not safe for me to look upon him.
Away—with me!

[*Goes in with his barons to the council-chamber, the door of which is left open.*]

Enter BECKET, *holding his cross of silver before him. The Bishops come round him.*

Hereford. The king will not abide thee with thy cross.
Permit me, my good lord, to bear it for thee,
Being thy chaplain.

Bec. No: it must protect me.

Foliot. I am the dean of the province: let me bear it.
Make not thy king a traitorous murderer.

Bec. Did not your barons draw their swords against me?

Enter ROGER OF YORK, *with his cross, advancing to* BECKET.

Bec. Wherefore dost thou presume to bear thy cross,
Against the solemn ordinance from Rome, out of thy province?

Roger of York. Why dost thou presume,
Arm'd with thy cross, to come before the king?

Fol. As chancellor thou wast against the Church,
Now as archbishop goest against the king;
For, like a fool, thou know'st no middle way.
Ay, ay! but art thou stronger than the king?

Bec. Strong—not in mine own self, but Heaven; true
To either function, holding it; and thou
Fast, scourge thyself, and mortify thy flesh.
Not spirit—thou remainest Gilbert Foliot.
Get ye hence,
Tell what I say to the king.

[*Exeunt* HEREFORD, FOLIOT, *and other bishops.*

Roger of York. The Church will hate thee. [*Exit.*

Herbert of Bosham counsels Becket to excommunicate them all! Some of the barons return and demand the payment by Becket of certain loans and revenues to the

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King. Becket asks for a day to ponder the demands, and tells them that he refuses to stand by the king's censure but will appeal to the Pope. The barons fling at him wisps of rushes from the floor as he departs, calling him a traitor. A herald comes with the king's command that none shall wrong or injure the archbishop. The great doors at the back of the hall are flung open. Without is a crowd who acclaim Becket.

In Rosamund's bower Henry has come to take refuge for an hour from the cares of state. Little Geoffrey, the child of Rosamund and the king, comes to play near them a while. Rosamund beseeches Henry to make friends with Becket again. His reply is that Becket will yet feel that he can strike, for he means to banish the archbishop's kindred from England. Rosamund reminds him that his enemy knows the secret of her bower, but he is confident that Becket will not betray his secret. He says that Becket would be more likely to excommunicate him. Before leaving he gives her the cross which Eleanor gave him.

King Louis of France, in the hope of serving the cause of the Church, brings about a meeting between Henry and Becket at Montmirail and tries to reconcile them. He asks Henry to reseat Becket at Canterbury and to recall his kindred from exile. Becket insists also upon excommunicating the king's evil counsellors, as he calls the barons and bishops who are opposed to him.

While they are parleying word is brought secretly to Becket that Queen Eleanor is prowling about Rosamund's bower. Finally Henry agrees to Becket's terms and announces that they are at amity. Left alone with Herbert of Bosham, Becket confides in him that he foresees his ultimate martyrdom.

Up to the woods near Rosamund's bower, the queen has come alone with Fitz Urse.

Elea. Up from the salt lips of the land we two
Have track'd the king to this dark inland wood;
And somewhere hereabouts he vanish'd. Here
His turtle builds: his exit is our adit:
Watch! he will out again, and presently.
[*A great horn winded.*]

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Fitz Urse. Hark! Madam!
Elea. Ay,
How ghostly sounds that horn in the black wood!
[*A countryman flying.*]
Whither away, man? What are you flying from?
Countryman. The witch! the witch! she sits naked by a great heap of gold in the middle of the wood, and when the horn sounds she comes out as a wolf. Get you hence! a man passed in there to-day: I holla'd to him, but he didn't hear me: he'll never out again, the witch has got him. I daren't stay—I daren't stay!
Elea. Kind of the witch to give thee warning tho'.
[*Man flies.*]
Is not this wood-witch of the rustic's fear
Our woodland Circe that hath witch'd the king?
[*Horn sounded. Another flying.*]
Fitz. Again! stay, fool, and tell me why thou fliest.
Coun. Fly thou, too. The king keeps his forest head of game here, and when that horn sounds, a score of wolf-dogs are let loose that will tear thee piecemeal! Linger not till the third horn. Fly! [*Exit.*
Elea. This is the likelier tale. We have hit the place.
Now let the king's fine game look to itself.
[*Horn.*]
Fitz. Again!—
And far on in the dark heart of the wood
I hear the yelping of the hounds of hell.
Elea. I have my dagger here to still their throats.
Fitz. Nay, Madam, not to-night—the night is falling.
What can be done to-night?
Elea. Well—well—away. [*Exit* Fitz Urse.
Geoffrey [*coming out of the wood*]. Light again! light again! Margery? no, that's a finer thing there. How it glitters!
Elea. Come to me, little one. How camest thou hither?
Geof. On my legs.
Elea. And mighty pretty legs, too. Thou art the prettiest child I ever saw. Wilt thou love me?
Geof. No; I only love mother.
Elea. Ay; and who is thy mother?

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Geof. They call her—— But she lives secret, you see.
Elea. Why?
Geof. Don't know why.
Elea. Ay, but some one comes to see her now and then. Who is he?
Geof. Can't tell.
Elea. What does she call him?
Geof. My liege.
Elea. Pretty one, how camest thou?
Geof. There was a bit of yellow silk here and there, and it looked pretty like a glowworm, and I thought if I followed it I should find the fairies.
Elea. I am the fairy, pretty one, a good fairy to thy mother. Take me to her.
Geof. There are good fairies and bad fairies, and sometimes she cries, and can't sleep sound o' nights because of the bad fairies.
Elea. She shall cry no more; she shall sleep sound enough if thou wilt take me to her. I am her good fairy.
Geof. But you don't look like a good fairy. Mother does. You are not pretty like mother.
Elea. We can't all of us be as pretty as thou art—[*aside*]—little bastard! Show me where thou camest out of the wood.
Geof. By this tree; but I don't know if I can find the way back again. [*Exeunt.*

Meanwhile Rosamund in her bower is a prey to anxiety on account of the prolonged absence of her boy. She has sent the nurse to search for him, and then a second woman, without avail. Suddenly Geoffrey appears with the queen.

Rosa. How dared you? Know you not this bower is secret,
Of and belonging to the King of England,
More sacred than his forests for the chase?
Nay, nay, Heaven help you; get you hence in haste
Lest worst befall you.
Elea. Child, I am mine own self
Of and belonging to the king. The king
Hath divers ofs and ons, ofs and belongings,
Almost as many as your true Mussulman—
Belongings, paramours, whom it pleases him

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HENRY IRVING AS "BECKET"

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To call his wives; but so it chances, child,
That I am his main paramour, his sultana.
But since the fondest pair of doves will jar,
Ev'n in a cage of gold, we had words of late,
And thereupon he call'd my children bastards.
Do you believe that you are married to him?

Rosa. I should believe it.

Elea. You must not believe it,
Because I have a wholesome medicine here
Puts that belief asleep. Your answer, beauty!
Do you believe that you are married to him?

Rosa. Geoffrey, my boy, I saw the ball you lost in the fork of the great willow over the brook. Go. See that you do not fall in. Go.

Geof. And leave you alone with the good fairy. She calls you beauty, but I don't like her looks.

Rosa. Go. [*Exit* GEOFFREY.

Elea. He is easily found again. *Do* you believe it?
I pray you then to take my sleeping-draught;
But if you should not care to take it—see! [*Draws a dagger.*]
What! have I scared the red rose from your face
Into your heart. But this will find it there,
And dig it from the root for ever.

Rosa. Help! Help!

Elea. They say that walls have ears; but these, it seems,
Have none! and I have none—to pity thee.

Rosa. I do beseech you—my child is so young.
I am not so happy I could not die myself,
But the child is so young. You have children—his;
And mine is the king's child; so, if you love him—
Nay, if you love him, there is great wrong done
Somehow; but if you do not—there are those
Who say you do not love him—let me go
With my young boy, and God will be our guide,
And I will beg my bread along the world.
I never meant you harm in any way.
See, I can say no more.

Elea. Will you not say you are not married to him?

Rosa. Ay, Madam, I can *say* it, if you will.

Elea. Then is thy pretty boy a bastard?

Rosa. No.

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Elea. And thou thyself a proven wanton?
Rosa. No.
I am none such. I never loved but one.
I have heard of such that range from love to love,
Like the wild beast—if you can call it love.
I have heard of such—yea, even among those
Who sit on thrones—I never saw any such,
Never knew any such, and howsoever
You do misname me, match'd with any such,
I am snow to mud.
Elea. The more the pity then
That thy true home—the heavens—cry out for thee
Who art too pure for earth.
Enter FITZ URSE.
Fitz. Give her to me.
Elea. The Judas-lover of our passion-play
Hath track'd us hither.
Fitz. Well, why not? I follow'd
You and the child: he babbled all the way.
Give her to me to make my honeymoon.
Elea. No! I follow out my hate and thy revenge.
Fitz. You bade me take revenge another way—
To bring her to the dust . . . Come with me, love,
And I will love thee . . . Madam, let her live.
I have a far-off burrow where the king
Would miss her and for ever.
Rosa. Give me the poison; set me free of him!
[ELEANOR *offers the vial.*]
No, no, I will not have it.
Elea. Then this other,
The wiser choice, because my sleeping-draught
May bloat thy beauty out of shape, and make
Thy body loathsome even to thy child;
While this but leaves thee with a broken heart,
A doll-face blanch'd and bloodless, over which
If pretty Geoffrey does not break his own,
It must be broken for him.
Rosa. O I see now
Your purpose is to fright me—a troubadour
You play with words. You had never used so many,
Not if you meant it, I am sure. The child——
No. . . . Mercy! No! [*Kneels.*]

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Elea. Play! . . . that bosom never
Heaved under the king's hand with such true passion
As at this loveless knife that stirs the riot,
Which it will quench in blood! Slave, if he love thee,
Thy life is worth the wrestle for it: what's here?
By very God, the cross I gave the king!
His village darling in some lewd caress
Has wheedled it off the king's neck to her own.
By thy leave, beauty, ay, the same! Fitz Urse,
The running down the chase is kindlier sport
Ev'n than the death. Take thy one chance;
Catch at the last straw. Kneel to thy lord Fitz Urse;
Crouch even because thou hatest him; fawn upon him
For thy life and thy son's.
Rosa [*rising*]. I am a Clifford,
My son a Clifford and Plantagenet.
I am to die then, tho' there stand beside thee
One who might grapple with thy dagger, if he
Had aught of man, or thou of woman; or I
Would bow to such a baseness as would make me
Most worthy of it; both of us will die,
Strike!
I challenge thee to meet me before God.
Answer me there.
Elea. [*raising the dagger*]. This in thy bosom, fool,
And after in thy bastard's!
Enter BECKET *from behind. He catches hold of her arm.*
Bec. Murderess!
[*The dagger falls; they stare at one another. After a pause.*]
Elea. My lord, we know you proud of your fine hand,
But having now admired it long enough,
We find that it is mightier than it seems—
At least mine own is frailer: you are laming it.
Bec. And lamed and maim'd to dislocation, better
Than raised to take a life which Henry bade me
Guard from the stroke that dooms thee after death
To wail in deathless flame.
Elea. My lord Fitz Urse.
Bec. He, too! what dost thou here?
Go, lest I blast thee with anathema
And make thee a world's horror.

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Fitz. My lord, I shall remember this.
Bec. I *do* remember thee.
[*Exit* FITZ URSE.
Take up your dagger; put it in the sheath.
Daughter, the world hath trick'd thee, leave it, daughter.
Come thou with me to Godstow nunnery.

Roger, Archbishop of York, the chief rival of Becket, persuades the king to listen again to the barons. While Becket lives, he swears, the king will never have a quiet hour. The bishops support Roger, and the king declares that Becket shall absolve them. Roger and the bishops go out.

Hen. Would he were dead! I have lost all love for him.
If God would take him in some sudden way——
Would he were dead.

The queen enters and tells Henry she has her fears lest Becket thrust him from the throne. Showing him the cross that she gave him and which he gave Rosamund, she says that Rosamund has sent it back as one dead henceforth to him. He suspects she has found the secret bower and murdered Rosamund, but the queen tells him Becket has put her in Godstow nunnery. In a wild rage, Henry turns to four knights who have come in and exclaims: "Sluggards and fools! The slave that eat my bread has kicked his king!" Why do they stand there staring, he demands. They are no king's men, but Becket's men. He leaves them. They draw their swords, with a cry of "King's men! King's men!"

When Becket returns to Canterbury monastery, John of Salisbury receives him with an expression of regret that he has not brought the olive branch home, but has raised the world against him.

Rosamund seeks an interview with Becket to implore him not to excommunicate the king. Becket has had no thought of doing so, in spite of a rumour that he contemplated it. He reassures Rosamund and tells her to hasten back to her nunnery.

Tracy, Fitz Urse, De Brito, and De Morville enter abruptly. Fitz Urse says they have a secret message from the king. All go out except the four knights and Becket.

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Fitz. We are all alone with him.
Shall I not smite him with his own cross-staff?

De Morville. No, look, the door is open: let him be.

Fitz. The king condemns your excommunicating——

Bec. This is no secret, but a public matter.

He recalls John of Salisbury and the monks. Fitz Urse says the king commands him to absolve the bishops whom he has excommunicated. Becket replies that they must ask the Pope for absolution. The knights crowd round him, accusing him of charging the king with treachery. Becket replies that he would stand clothed with the full authority of Rome though all the swords in England flashed above him.

De Morville. Know you not. You have spoken to the peril of your life?

Bec. As I shall speak again.

The other three knights shout "To arms!" and rush out while De Morville pauses a moment to listen to Becket. There is a tumult outside as the gates are clanged. Monks slam the doors of the hall, but instantly crashing blows are delivered on them. The monks flee. John of Salisbury beseeches Becket to take refuge in his cathedral. Becket asks why all monks should be cowards, but Grim, a monk of Cambridge, who has remained, declares he would stand by him to the death.

Scene: North transept of Canterbury Cathedral. On the right hand a flight of steps leading to the choir, another flight on the left, leading to the north aisle. Winter afternoon slowly darkening. Monks heard chanting the service. Rosamund kneeling.

Rosa. O blessed saint, O glorious Benedict—
These arm'd men in the city, these fierce faces—
Thy holy follower founded Canterbury—
Save that dear head which now is Canterbury,
Save him, he saved my life, he saved my child,
Save him, his blood would darken Henry's name;
Save him till all as saintly as thyself
He miss the searching flame of purgatory,
And pass at once perfect to Paradise.

[*Noise of steps and voices in the cloisters.*]

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Hark! Is it they? Coming! He is not here—
Not yet, thank Heaven. O save him! [*Goes up steps leading to choir.*]

BECKET *enters, forced along by* JOHN OF SALISBURY *and* GRIM.

Bec. No, I tell you!
I cannot bear a hand upon my person,
Why do you force me thus against my will?
Grim. My lord, we force you from your enemies.
Bec. As you would force a king from being crown'd.
[*Service stops. Monks come down from the stairs that lead to the choir.*]
Monks. Here is the great archbishop! He lives! He lives!
Bec. Back, I say!
Go on with the office. Shall not Heaven be served
Tho' earth's last earthquake clash'd the minster-bells,
And the great deeps were broken up again,
And hiss'd against the sun?
[*Noise in the cloisters.*]
Monks. The murderers, hark!
Let us hide! Let us hide!
Bec. What do these people fear?
Grim. Those arm'd men in the cloister.
Bec. Be not such cravens!
I will go out and meet them.
[*Grim and others.*]
Shut the doors!
We will not have him slain before our face.
[*They close the doors of the transept. Knocking.*]
Fly, fly, my lord, before they burst the doors!
[*Knocking.*]
Bec. Why, these are our own monks who follow'd us!
And will you bolt them out, and have *them* slain?
Undo the doors: the church is not a castle:
Stand by, make way!
[*Opens the doors. Enter monks from cloister.*]
Monks. A score of knights all arm'd with swords and axes——
To the choir, to the choir!
[*The monks divide, part flying by the stairs on the right, part by those on the left. The rush of these last bear*

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BECKET *along with them same way up the steps, where he is left standing alone.*]

John of Salisbury. No, to the crypt!

Grim. To the crypt? No—no,
To the chapel of St. Blaise beneath the roof!

Bec. Oh, no, not either way, nor any way
Save by that way which leads thro' night to light.

Enter the four knights. JOHN OF SALISBURY *flies to the altar of St. Benedict.*

Fitz. Here, here, king's men! [*Catches hold of the last flying monk.*]
Where is the traitor Becket?

Bec. Here.
No traitor to the king, but priest of God,
Primate of England. [*Descending into the transept.*]
I am he ye seek.
What would ye have of me?

Fitz. Your life.

De Tracy. Your life.

De Morv. Save that you will absolve the bishops.

Bec. Never,
Except they make submission to the Church.
You had my answer to that cry before.

De Morv. Why, then you are a dead man; flee!

Bec. I will not.
I am readier to be slain, than thou to slay.
Hugh, I know well thou hast but half a heart
To bathe this sacred pavement with my blood.
God pardon thee and these, but God's full curse
Shatter you all to pieces if ye harm
One of my flock!

Fitz. Seize him and carry him!
Come with us—nay—thou art our prisoner—come!
[FITZ URSE *lays hold of the archbishop's pall.*]

Bec. Down! [*Throws him headlong.*]

De Morv. Ay, make him prisoner, do not harm the man.

Fitz. [*advances with drawn sword.*] I told thee that I should remember thee!

Bec. Profligate pander!

Fitz. Do you hear that? Strike, strike.
[*Strikes the archbishop, and wounds him in the forehead.*]

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Bec. [*covers his eyes with his hand*]. I do commend my cause to God.

Fitz. Strike him, Tracy!

Rosa. [*rushing down steps from the choir*]. No! No! No! No! Mercy, mercy.
As you would hope for mercy.

Fitz. Strike, I say.

Grim. O God, O noble knights, O sacrilege!

Fitz. Strike!

De Tracy. There is my answer then.

[*Sword falls on* GRIM'S *arm and glances from it, wounding* BECKET.]
This last to rid thee of a world of brawls!

Bec. [*falling on his knees*]. Into Thy hands, O Lord—into Thy hands! [*Sinks prone.*]

De Brito. The traitor's dead, and will arise no more.

De Brito, De Tracy, Fitz Urse rush out crying, "King's men!" De Morville follows slowly. Lightning flashes through the cathedral. Rosamund kneels by the body of Becket. The chanting of the monks comes in gusts from the church above, mingled with the rumbling of the thunder, which shakes the great edifice to its foundation.

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LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN

By Oscar Wilde

First played in London at the St. James Theatre on February 7, 1892.

Argument: Lady Windermere quarrels with her husband, having heard that he has been over-attentive to a certain woman. This woman is her own mother, whom she has not seen since she was a baby and believes to be dead, and whom Lord Windermere wishes to help without revealing her identity; but when Lord Windermere brings her to the house under an assumed name, Lady Windermere leaves him, intending to run away with a lover. Will Lord Windermere lose his wife and fail to help her mother?

It is Lady Windermere's birthday. To celebrate her coming of age she is to give a dance in the evening at her home in Carlton Terrace. Among the presents which she has received is a beautiful fan from her husband, Lord Windermere.

Lord Darlington calls. Lady Windermere warns him at once that she does not wish to have him paying her elaborate compliments, which would only spoil their friendship. She tells him that her mother died when she was a mere child, and that she was brought up by her father's sister, who was stern to her but taught her what the world is forgetting, the difference between what is right and what is wrong.

Lord D. Do you think then—of course I am only putting an imaginary instance—do you think, that in the case of a young married couple, say about two years married, if the husband suddenly becomes the intimate friend of a woman of—well, more than doubtful character, is always calling upon her, lunching with her, and probably paying

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her bills—do you think that the wife should not console herself?

Lady Windermere can see no reason why, if the husband is vile, the wife should be vile also. The Duchess of Berwick and Lady Agatha Carlisle are announced. The Duchess doesn't know what Society is coming to. The most dreadful people seem to go everywhere. They certainly come to her parties—the men get quite furious if one doesn't ask them. Really, some one should make a stand against it. Lady Windermere says that she will. She will have no one in her house about whom there is a scandal.

Lord D. Oh, don't say that, Lady Windermere. I should never be admitted!

Duchess of B. Oh, men don't matter. With women it is different. We're good. Some of us are, at least. But we are positively getting elbowed into the corner. Our husbands would really forget our existence if we didn't nag at them from time to time, just to remind them that we have a perfect legal right to do so.

Lord D. It's a curious thing, Duchess, about the game of marriage—a game, by the way, that is going out of fashion—the wives hold all the honors, and invariably lose the odd trick.

Duchess of B. The odd trick? Is that the husband, Lord Darlington?

Lord D. It would be rather a good name for the modern husband.

[LORD DARLINGTON *goes presently.*]

Duchess of B. What a charming, wicked creature! I like him so much. I'm quite delighted he's gone! How sweet you're looking! Where *do* you get your gowns? And now I must tell you how sorry I am for you, dear Margaret. Agatha, darling!

Lady A. Yes, mamma. [*Rises.*]

Duchess of B. Will you go and look over the photograph album that I see there?

Lady A. Yes, mamma. [*Goes to table.*]

Duchess of B. Dear girl! She is so fond of photographs of Switzerland. Such a pure taste, I think. But I really am so sorry for you, Margaret.

Lady W. [*smiling*]. Why, Duchess?

Duchess of B. Oh, on account of that horrid woman.

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She dresses so well, too, which makes it much worse, sets such a dreadful example. Augustus—you know my disreputable brother—such a trial to us all—well, Augustus is completely infatuated about her. It is quite scandalous, for she is absolutely inadmissible into society. Many a woman has a past, but I am told that she has at least a dozen, and that they all fit.

Lady W. Whom are you talking about, Duchess?

Duchess of B. About Mrs. Erlynne.

Lady W. Mrs. Erlynne? I never heard of her, Duchess. And what *has* she to do with me?

Duchess of B. My poor child! Agatha, darling!

Lady A. Yes, mamma.

Duchess of B. Will you go out on the terrace and look at the sunset?

Lady A. Yes, mamma.

[*Exit through window.*

Duchess of B. Sweet girl! So devoted to sunsets! Shows such refinement of feeling, does it not? After all, there is nothing like nature, is there?

The Duchess proceeds with her information. Lord Windermere goes to see Mrs. Erlynne continually, four or five times a week, and stops for hours at a time. Mrs. Erlynne, moreover, has got a lot of money out of somebody. Six months ago she came to London without anything at all to speak of, and now she has a charming house in Mayfair and drives her pony in the park every afternoon, and all since she has known poor dear Windermere. Lady Windermere protests that she can't believe it.

Duchess of B. But it's quite true, my dear. The whole of London knows it. That is why I felt it was better to come and talk to you, and advise you take Windermere away at once to Homburg or Aix, where he'll have something to amuse him, and where you can watch him all day long. I assure you, my dear, that on several occasions after I was first married I had to pretend to be very ill, and was obliged to drink the most unpleasant mineral waters, merely to get Berwick out of town. He was so extremely susceptible. Though I am bound to say he never gave away any large sums of money to anybody. He is far too high-principled for that.

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The Duchess avers that men grow old, but that they never become good.

Lady W. Windermere and I married for love.

Duchess of B. Yes, we begin like that. It was only Berwick's brutal and incessant threats of suicide that made me accept him at all, and before the year was out he was running after all kinds of petticoats, every color, every shape, every material. In fact, before the honeymoon was over, I caught him winking at my maid, a most pretty, respectable girl. I dismissed her at once without a character. No, I remember I passed her on to my sister; poor dear Sir George is so short-sighted, I thought it wouldn't matter. But it did, though it was most unfortunate.

With a caution not to take Windermere's aberration too much to heart, the Duchess departs. Lady Windermere finds a check book of her husband's. It is locked, but she breaks it open. In it are entries of 600, 700, and 800 pounds to Mrs. Erlynne. Lord Windermere enters. Lady Windermere taxes him with his infatuation for Mrs. Erlynne. He replies quietly that she is speaking very unjustly. She continues her invective. She doesn't mind the money he has squandered, but what she does mind is that he should pass from the love that is given to the love that is bought. It is she who feels degraded, utterly stained. He declares that he never loved any one but her. She catechises him about Mrs. Erlynne.

Lord W. I am not going to give you any details about her life. I tell you simply this—Mrs. Erlynne was once honored, loved, respected. She was well born, she had a position—she lost everything—threw it away if you like. That makes it all the more bitter. Misfortunes one can endure—they come from the outside, they are accidents. But to suffer for one's own faults—ah! there is the sting of life. It was twenty years ago, too. She was little more than a girl then. She had been a wife for even less time than you have.

Lady W. I am not interested in her—and—you should not mention this woman and me in the same breath. It is an error of taste.

Lord Windermere tells his wife that she could save this woman, who wants to get back into Society and needs somebody to help her. He asks her to send Mrs. Erlynne

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an invitation to their party that night. She says he is mad. He entreats her to give Mrs. Erlynne this chance of a happier life.

Lady W. No! If a woman really repents, she never wishes to return to the society that has made or seen her ruin.

Lord W. I beg of you.

Lady W. [*crossing to door*]. I am going to dress for dinner, and don't mention the subject again this evening. Arthur [*going to him*], you fancy because I have no father or mother that I am alone in the world and that you can treat me as you choose. You are wrong, I have friends, many friends.

Lord W. Margaret, you are talking foolishly, recklessly. I won't argue with you, but I insist upon your asking Mrs. Erlynne to-night.

Lady W. I shall do nothing of the kind.

Lord W. You refuse?

Lady W. Absolutely!

Lord W. Ah, Margaret, do this for my sake; it is her last chance.

Lady W. What has that to do with me?

Lord W. How hard good women are!

Lady W. How weak bad men are!

Lord W. Margaret, none of us men may be good enough for the women we marry—that is quite true—but you don't imagine I would ever—oh, the suggestion is monstrous!

Lady W. Why should *you* be different from other men? I am told that there is hardly a husband in London who does not waste his life over *some* shameful passion.

Lord W. I am not one of them.

Lady W. I am not sure of that!

Lord W. You are sure in your heart. But don't make chasm after chasm between us. God knows the last few minutes have thrust us wide enough apart. Sit down and write the card.

Lady W. Nothing in the whole world would induce me.

Lord W. [*crossing to the bureau*]. Then I will. [*Rings electric bell, sits and writes card.*]

Lady W. You are going to invite this woman? [*Crossing to him.*]

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Lord W. Yes. [*Pause.*]

Enter PARKER.

Lord W. Parker!

Parker. Yes, my lord.

Lord W. Have this note sent to Mrs. Erlynne at No. 84A Curzon Street. [*Crossing and giving note to* PARKER.] There is no answer.

[*Exit* PARKER.

Lady W. Arthur, if that woman comes here, I shall insult her.

Lord W. Margaret, don't say that.

Lady W. I mean it.

Lord W. Child, if you did such a thing, there's not a woman in London who wouldn't pity you.

Lady W. There is not a *good* woman in London who would not applaud me. We have been too lax. We must make an example. I propose to begin to-night. [*Picking up fan.*] Yes, you gave me this fan to-day; it was your birthday present. If that woman crosses my threshold, I shall strike her across the face with it.

Lord W. Margaret, you couldn't do such a thing.

Lady W. You don't know me! [*Moves R.*]

Enter PARKER.

Parker!

Parker. Yes, my lady.

Lady W. I shall dine in my own room. I don't want dinner, in fact. See that everything is ready by half-past ten. And, Parker, be sure you pronounce the names of the guests very distinctly to-night. Sometimes you speak so fast that I miss them. I am particularly anxious to hear the names quite clearly, so as to make no mistake. You understand, Parker?

Parker. Yes, my lady.

Lady W. That will do! [*Exit* PARKER.] [*Speaking to* LORD W.] Arthur, if that woman comes here—I warn you——

Lord W. Margaret, you'll ruin us!

Lady W. Us! From this moment my life is separate from yours. But if you wish to avoid a public scandal, write at once to this woman, and tell her that I forbid her to come here!

Lord W. I will not—I cannot—she must come!

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Lady W. Then I shall do exactly as I have said. [*Goes R.*] You leave me no choice. [*Exit R.*

Lord W. [*Calling after her*]. Margaret! Margaret! [*A pause.*] My God! What shall I do! I dare not tell her who this woman really is. The shame would kill her. [*Sinks down into a chair and buries his face in his hands.*]

Doors opening from the drawing-room give a glimpse of the ballroom, where a band is playing. The drawing-room is crowded with guests. Lady Windermere is receiving them. There is a great deal of chatter. The Duchess of Berwick revises her daughter's dance card. Lord Augustus Lorton tells Lord Windermere that he wants to know something about Mrs. Erlynne, where she comes from and why she has no relations. He says the women are all very down on her. He asks if Lord Windermere thinks she will ever get into "this demmed thing called Society," and is gratified to learn that she is coming to the ball. Cecil Graham has heard that Lord Augustus is to be married again, and asks him if he has been twice married and once divorced, or twice divorced and once married, which sounds so much more probable. Lord Windermere joins Lady Windermere.

Lord W. Margaret, I *must* speak to you.

Lady W. Will you hold my fan for me, Lord Darlington? Thanks. [*Comes down to him.*]

Lord W. [*crossing to her*]. Margaret, what you said before dinner was, of course, impossible?

Lady W. That woman is not coming here to-night!

Lord W. Mrs. Erlynne is coming here, and if you in any way annoy or wound her, you will bring shame and sorrow on us both. Remember that! Ah, Margaret! only trust me! A wife should trust her husband!

Lady W. London is full of women who trust their husbands. One can always recognize them. They look so thoroughly unhappy. I am not going to be one of them. [*Moves up.*] Lord Darlington, will you give me back my fan, please? Thanks . . . A useful thing, a fan, isn't it? . . . I want a friend to-night, Lord Darlington. I didn't know I would want one so soon.

Lord D. Lady Windermere! I knew the time would come some day; but why to-night?

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Lord W. I *will* tell her. I must. It would be terrible if there were any scene. Margaret . . .

Parker. Mrs. Erlynne.

Lord W. starts. Mrs. E. enters, very beautifully dressed and very dignified. Lady W. clutches at her fan, then lets it drop on the floor. She bows coldly to Mrs. E., who bows to her sweetly in turn, and sails into the room.

Lord D. You have dropped your fan, Lady Windermere. [*Picks it up and hands it to her.*]

Mrs. E. How do you do, again, Lord Windermere? How charming your sweet wife looks! Quite a picture!

Lord W. [*in a low voice*]. It was terribly rash of you to come!

Mrs. E. [*smiling*]. The wisest thing I ever did in my life. And, by the way, you must pay me a good deal of attention this evening. I am afraid of the women. You must introduce me to some of them. The men I can always manage. How do you do, Lord Augustus? You have quite neglected me lately. I have not seen you since yesterday. I am afraid you're faithless. Every one told me so.

Lord A. Now really, Mrs. Erlynne, allow me to explain.

Mrs. E. No, dear Lord Augustus, you can't explain anything. It is your chief charm.

People shun Mrs. Erlynne. She asks Lord Windermere to dance the first dance with her, which, she says, will make Lord Augustus jealous. Lady Windermere tells Lord Darlington that Mrs. Erlynne's coming is monstrous, unbearable, and upbraids him for not having spoken out plainly about the woman and Lord Windermere. Lord Darlington replies that a man cannot tell such things about another man, but says he would have done so if he had known that Mrs. Erlynne was coming to the ball, in order to spare Lady Windermere the insult. He insists that she cannot live with her husband any longer; she would have to be the mask of his real life, the cloak to hide his secret.

Lady W. You are right—you are terribly right. But where am I to turn? You said you would be my friend, Lord Darlington. Tell me, what am I to do? Be my friend now.

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Lord D. Between men and women there is no friendship possible. There is passion, enmity, worship, love, but no friendship. I love you——

Lady W. No! No! [*Rises.*]

Lord D. Yes, I love you! You are more to me than anything in the whole world. What does your husband give you? Nothing. Whatever is in him he gives to this wretched woman, whom he has thrust into your society, into your home, to shame you before every one. I offer you my life——

Lady W. Lord Darlington!

Lord D. My life—my whole life. Take it, and do with it what you will. . . . I love you—love you as I have never loved any living thing. From the moment I met you I loved you, loved you blindly, adoringly, madly! You did not know it then—you know it now—— Leave this house to-night. I won't tell you that the world matters nothing, or the world's voice, or the voice of society. They matter a good deal. They matter far too much. But there are moments when one has to choose between living one's own life, fully, entirely, completely—or dragging out some false, shallow, degrading existence that the world in its hypocrisy demands. You have that moment now. Choose! Oh, my love, choose!

Lady W. [*moving slowly away from him, and looking at him with startled eyes*]. I have not the courage.

Lord D. [*following her*]. Yes; you have the courage. There may be six months of pain, of disgrace even, but when you no longer bear his name, when you bear mine, all will be well. Margaret, my love, my wife that shall be some day—yes, my wife! You know it! What are you now? This woman has the place that belongs by right to you. Oh! go—go out of this house, with head erect, with a smile upon your lips, with courage in your eyes. All London will know why you did it; and who will blame you? No one. If they do, what matter? Wrong? What is wrong? It's wrong for a man to abandon his wife for a shameless woman. It is wrong for a wife to remain with a man who so dishonors her. You said once you would make no compromise with things. Make none now. Be brave! Be yourself!

Lady W. I am afraid of being myself. Let me think!

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Let me wait! My husband may return to me. [*Sits down on sofa.*]

Lord D. And you would take him back! You are not what I thought you were. You are just the same as every other woman. You would stand anything rather than face the censure of a world whose praise you would despise. In a week you will be driving with this woman in the park. She will be your constant guest—your dearest friend. You would endure anything rather than break with one blow this monstrous tie. You are right. You have no courage; none!

If Lady Windermere will not go with him, Lord Darlington says she will never see him again. Her only answer is to exclaim that she is terribly alone in life. The Duchess of Berwick comes from the ballroom with other guests and joins Lady Windermere. She apologizes for what she said about Mrs. Erlynne, but still advises the trip to Homburg or Aix. Lady Windermere, with a look of pain, watches Mrs. Erlynne talking with her husband.

Mrs. E. Oh, yes! He's to call to-morrow at twelve o'clock! He wanted to propose to-night. In fact he did. He kept on proposing. Poor Augustus, you know how he repeats himself. Such a bad habit! But I told him I wouldn't give him an answer till to-morrow. Of course I am going to take him. And I dare say I'll make him an admirable wife, as wives go. And there is a great deal of good in Lord Augustus. Fortunately it is all on the surface. Just where good qualities should be. Of course you must help me in this matter.

Mrs. Erlynne hopes Lord Windermere will make her a handsome settlement. She thinks it would be well for her to be able to tell Lord Augustus that a distant relative left her an income of two thousand pounds a year. They go out on the terrace. Lady Windermere is left by herself.

Lady W. To stay in this house any longer is impossible. To-night a man who loves me offered me his whole life. I refused it. It was foolish of me. I will offer him mine now. I will give him mine. I will go to him! [*Puts on cloak and goes to door, then turns back. Sits down at table and writes a letter, puts it into an envelope, and leaves it on table.*] Arthur has never understood me. When he reads this, he will. He may do as he chooses now with his life. I

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have done with mine as I think best, as I think right. It is he who has broken the bond of marriage—not I. I only break its bondage. [*Exit.*

[PARKER *enters and crosses toward the ballroom.* *Enter* MRS. E.]

Mrs. E. Is Lady Windermere in the ballroom?

Parker. Her ladyship has just gone out.

Mrs. E. Gone out? She's not on the terrace?

Parker. No, madam. Her ladyship has just gone out of the house.

Mrs. E. [*starts, and looks at the servant with a puzzled expression on her face*]. Out of the house?

Parker. Yes, madam—her ladyship told me she had left a letter for his lordship on the table.

Mrs. E. A letter for Lord Windermere?

Parker. Yes, madam.

Mrs. E. Thank you. [*Exit* PARKER. *The music in the ballroom stops.*] Gone out of her house! A letter addressed to her husband! [*Goes over to bureau and looks at letter. Takes it up and lays it down again with a shudder of fear.*] No, no! It would be impossible! Life doesn't repeat its tragedies like that! Oh, why does this horrible fancy come across me? Why do I remember now the one moment of my life I most wish to forget? Does life repeat its tragedies? [*Tears letter open and reads it, then sinks down into a chair with a gesture of anguish.*] Oh, how terrible! The same words that twenty years ago I wrote to her father! and how bitterly I have been punished for it! No; my punishment, my real punishment is to-night, is now! [*Still seated.*]

Enter LORD W.

Lord W. Have you said good-night to my wife?

Mrs. E. [*Crushing letter in her hand*]. Yes.

Lord W. Where is she?

Mrs. E. She is very tired. She has gone to bed. She said she had a headache.

Lord W. I must go to her. You'll excuse me?

Mrs. E. [*rising hurriedly*]. Oh, no! It's nothing serious. She's only very tired, that is all. Besides, there are people still in the supper-room. She wants you to make her apologies to them. She said she didn't wish to be disturbed. [*Drops letter.*] She asked me to tell you.

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Lord W. [*picks up letter*]. You have dropped something.

Mrs. E. Oh, yes, thank you, that is mine. [*Puts out her hand to take it.*]

Lord W. [*still looking at letter*]. But it's my wife's handwriting, isn't it?

Mrs. E. [*takes the letter quickly*]. Yes, it's—an address. Will you ask them to call my carriage, please?

Lord W. Certainly. [*Exit.*

Mrs. E. Thanks. What can I do? What can I do? I feel a passion awakening within me that I never felt before. What can it mean? The daughter must not be like the mother—that would be terrible. How can I save her? How can I save my child? A moment may ruin a life. Who knows that better than I? Windermere must be got out of the house; that is absolutely necessary. But how shall I do it? It must be done somehow. Ah!

Enter LORD AUGUSTUS *carrying bouquet.*

Lord A. Dear lady, I am in such suspense! May I not have an answer to my request?

Mrs. E. Lord Augustus, listen to me. You are to take Lord Windermere down to your club at once, and keep him there as long as possible. You understand?

Lord A. But you said you wished me to keep early hours!

Mrs. E. [*nervously*]. Do what I tell you. Do what I tell you.

Lord A. And my reward?

Mrs. E. Your reward? Your reward? Oh! ask me that to-morrow. But don't let Windermere out of your sight to-night. If you do I will never forgive you. I will never speak to you again. I'll have nothing to do with you. Remember you are to keep Windermere at your club, and don't let him come back to-night.

[*Exit.*

Lord A. Well, really, I might be her husband already. Positively I might. [*Follows her in a bewildered manner.*

Lady Windermere has come to the rooms of Lord Darlington and is waiting for him in a state of painful suspense. She thinks that by this time her husband must have read her letter, and that if he cared for her he would have come after her and taken her back by force. She

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believes he is entrammeled by Mrs. Erlynne. "If a woman wants to hold a man," she exclaims, "she has merely to appeal to what is worst in him. We make gods of men and they leave us. Others make brutes of them and they fawn and are faithful. How hideous life is!" She begins to think she was horribly mad to come. She would return if she had not written that fatal letter. Now she must leave England with Lord Darlington. Mrs. Erlynne enters hastily and tells Lady Windermere that she is on the brink of ruin. She must take the carriage in which Mrs. Erlynne came and go back to her husband.

Lady W. Mrs. Erlynne—if you had not come here, I would have gone back. But now that I see you, I feel that nothing in the whole world would induce me to live under the same roof as Lord Windermere. You fill me with horror. There is something about you that stirs the wildest rage within me. And I know why you are here. My husband sent you to lure me back that I might serve as a blind to whatever relations exist between you and him.

Mrs. E. Oh! You don't think that—you can't!

Lady W. Go back to my husband, Mrs. Erlynne. He belongs to you and not to me. I suppose he is afraid of a scandal. Men are such cowards. They outrage every law of the world, and are afraid of the world's tongue. But he had better prepare himself. He shall have a scandal. He shall have the worst scandal there has been in London for years. He shall see his name in every vile paper, mine on every hideous placard.

Mrs. E. No—no——

Lady W. Yes! he shall. Had he come himself, I admit I would have gone back to the life of degradation you and he had prepared for me—I was going back—but to stay himself at home, and to send you as his messenger—oh! it was infamous—infamous!

Mrs. E. Lady Windermere, you wrong me horribly—you wrong your husband horribly. He doesn't know you are here—he thinks you are safe in your own house. He thinks you are asleep in your own room. He never read the mad letter you wrote to him!

Lady W. Never read it!

Mrs. E. No—he knows nothing about it.

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Lady W. How simple you think me! [*Going to her.*] You are lying to me!

Mrs. E. [*restraining herself*]. I am not. I am telling you the truth.

Lady W. If my husband didn't read my letter, how is it that you are here? Who told you I had left the house you were shameless enough to enter? Who told you where I had gone to? My husband told you, and sent you to decoy me back.

Mrs. E. Your husband has never seen the letter. I—saw it, I opened it. I—read it.

Lady W. [*turning to her*]. You opened a letter of mine to my husband? You wouldn't dare!

Mrs. E. Dare! Oh! to save you from the abyss into which you are falling, there is nothing in the world I would not dare, nothing in the whole world. Here is the letter. Your husband has never read it. [*Going to the fireplace.*] It should never have been written. [*Tears it and throws it into the fire.*]

Lady W. [*with infinite contempt in her voice and look*]. How do I know that that was my letter after all? You seem to think the commonest device can take me in.

Lady Windermere will not believe a woman whose life is a lie, a woman whom it is an infamy to meet, a degradation to know, a vile woman, a woman who comes between husband and wife. Mrs. Erlynne says that what Lord Windermere has done for her he did to save his wife from shame.

Lady W. What do you mean? You are insolent! What have I to do with you?

Mrs. E. [*humbly*]. Nothing. I know it—but I tell you that your husband loves you—that you may never meet with such love again in your whole life—that such love you will never meet—and that if you throw it away, the day may come when you will starve for love and it will not be given to you, beg for love and it will be denied you—— Oh! Arthur loves you!

Lady W. Arthur? And you tell me there is nothing between you?

Mrs. E. Lady Windermere, before Heaven your husband is guiltless of all offence toward you! And I—I tell you that had it ever occurred to me that such a monstrous

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suspicion would have entered your mind, I would have died rather than have crossed your life or his—oh! died, gladly died! [*Moves away to sofa.*]

Lady W. You talk as if you had a heart. Women like you have no hearts. Heart is not in you. You are bought and sold.

Mrs. E. [*starts, with a gesture of pain. Then restrains herself, and comes over to where* LADY W. *is sitting. As she speaks, she stretches out her hands toward her, but does not dare to touch her*]. Believe what you choose about me. I am not worth a moment's sorrow. But don't spoil your beautiful young life on my account! You don't know what may be in store for you, unless you leave this house at once. You don't know what it is to fall into the pit, to be despised, mocked, abandoned, sneered at—to be an outcast! to find the door shut against one, to have to creep in by hideous byways, afraid every moment lest the mask should be stripped from one's face, and all the while to hear the laughter, the horrible laughter of the world, a thing more tragic than all the tears the world has ever shed. You don't know what it is. One pays for one's sin, and then one pays again, and all one's life one pays. You must never know that. As for me, if suffering be an expiation, then at this moment I have expiated all my faults, whatever they have been; for to-night you have made a heart in one who had it not, made it and broken it. But let that pass. I may have wrecked my own life, but I will not let you wreck yours. You—why, you are a mere girl, you would be lost. You haven't got the kind of brains that enables a woman to get back. You have neither the wit nor the courage. You couldn't stand dishonor. No! Go back, Lady Windermere, to the husband who loves you, whom you love. You have a child, Lady Windermere. Go back to that child who even now, in pain or in joy, may be calling to you. [LADY W. *rises.*] God gave you that child. He will require from you that you make his life fine, that you watch over him. What answer will you make to God if his life is ruined through you? Back to your house, Lady Windermere—your husband loves you. He has never swerved for a moment from the love he bears you. But even if he had a thousand loves, you must stay with your child. If he was harsh to you, you must stay with

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your child. If he ill-treated you, you must stay with your child. If he abandoned you, your place is with your child. [LADY W. *bursts into tears and buries her face in her hands. Rushing to her.*] Lady Windermere!

Lady W. [*holding out her hands to her, helplessly, as a child might do*]. Take me home. Take me home. [MRS. E. *is about to embrace her; then restrains herself. There is a look of wonderful joy in her face.*]

She gets Lady Windermere's cloak and gives it to her. Then, as they are going toward the door, Lady Windermere stops suddenly, hearing voices. She recognizes her husband's tones. Mrs. Erlynne hides her behind the window curtains, and herself is going to face the men when she hears the voice of Lord Augustus Lorton. She quickly slips into an adjoining room. Lord Darlington, Mr. Dumby, Lord Windermere, Lord Augustus Lorton, and Mr. Cecil Graham enter. They have been turned out of a club at two o'clock in the morning, when the lively part of the evening is only just beginning, says Dumby, yawning. Lord Augustus wants to talk about Mrs. Erlynne. It appears that she has explained one or two things that had worried him. Lord Augustus prefers a woman with a past; they are always so amusing to talk to. Cecil Graham says he will have lots of topics of conversation with Mrs. Erlynne. Dumby remarks that the youth of the present day have absolutely no respect for dyed hair. Lord Windermere complains that although Graham knows nothing about Mrs. Erlynne, he is always talking scandal against her.

Cecil G. [*coming toward him*]. My dear Arthur, *I* never talk scandal. *I* only talk gossip.

Lord W. What is the difference between scandal and gossip?

Cecil G. Oh! gossip is charming! History is merely gossip. But scandal is gossip made tedious by morality. Now *I* never moralize. A man who moralizes is usually a hypocrite, and a woman who moralizes is invariably plain. There is nothing in the whole world so unbecoming to a woman as a nonconformist conscience. And most women know it, I'm glad to say.

Lord A. Just my sentiments, dear boy, just my sentiments.

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Cecil G. Sorry to hear it, Tuppy; whenever people agree with me I always feel I must be wrong.

[LORD DARLINGTON *declares that the woman he loves is the only good woman he ever met in his life.*]

Cecil G. [*lighting a cigarette*]. Well, you are a lucky fellow! Why, I have met hundreds of good women. I never seem to meet any but good women. The world is perfectly packed with good women. To know them is a middle-class education.

Lord D. This woman has purity and innocence. She has everything we men have lost.

Cecil G. My dear fellow, what on earth should we men do going about with purity and innocence? A carefully thought-out buttonhole is much more effective.

Dumby. She doesn't really love you then?

Lord D. No, she does not!

Dumby. I congratulate you, my dear fellow. In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it. The last is much the worst, the last is a real tragedy! But I am interested to hear she does not love you. How long could you love a woman who didn't love you, Cecil?

Cecil G. A woman who didn't love me? Oh, all my life!

Dumby. So could I. But it's so difficult to meet one.

Lord D. How can you be so conceited, Dumby?

Dumby. I didn't say it as a matter of conceit. I said it as a matter of regret. I have been wildly, madly adored. I am sorry I have. It has been an immense nuisance. I should like to be allowed a little time to myself now and then.

Lord A. [*looking round*]. Time to educate yourself, I suppose.

Dumby. No, time to forget all I have learned. That is much more important, dear Tuppy.

[LORD A. *moves uneasily in his chair.*]

Lord D. What cynics you fellows are!

Cecil G. What is a cynic? [*Sitting on the back of the sofa.*]

Lord D. A man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

Cecil G. And a sentimentalist, my dear Darlington, is

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a man who sees an absurd value in everything and doesn't know the market price of any single thing.

Cecil Graham, who has been standing with his back to the fireplace, calls Lord Augustus over and tells him that while Lord Darlington has been moralizing he has got some woman in his rooms all the time. He shows him a fan. The situation is so amusing that he attracts Lord Windermere's attention and shows him the fan, too.

Lord W. Good God! [*Seizes the fan*—DUMBY *rises.*]

Cecil G. What is the matter?

Lord W. Lord Darlington!

Lord D. [*turning round*]. Yes!

Lord W. What is my wife's fan doing here in your rooms? Hands off, Cecil. Don't touch me.

Lord D. Your wife's fan?

Lord W. Yes, here it is!

Lord D. [*walking toward him*]. I don't know!

Lord W. You must know. I demand an explanation. Don't hold me, you fool! [*To* CECIL G.]

Lord D. [*aside*]. She is here after all!

Lord W. Speak, sir! Why is my wife's fan here? Answer me, by God! I'll search your rooms, and if my wife's here, I'll—— [*Moves.*]

Lord D. You shall not search my rooms. You have no right to do so. I forbid you!

Lord W. You scoundrel! I'll not leave your room till I have searched every corner of it! What moves behind that curtain? [*Rushes toward the curtain C.*]

Mrs. E. [*enters behind R.*]. Lord Windermere!

Lord W. Mrs. Erlynne!

[*Every one starts and turns round.* LADY W. *slips out from behind the curtain and glides from the room L.*]

Mrs. E. I am afraid I took your wife's fan in mistake for my own when I was leaving your house to-night. I am so sorry. [*Takes fan from him.* LORD W. *looks at her in contempt.* LORD D. *in mingled astonishment and anger.* LORD A. *turns away. The other men smile at each other.*]

In the morning Lady Windermere is in doubt as to what happened after her escape from Lord Darlington's room. For all she knows Mrs. Erlynne may have told her hus-

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band how the fan got there. One thinks one lives securely out of reach of temptation, sin, folly, she says to herself, and then suddenly—she rings for her maid and learns that Lord Windermere did not come in until five o'clock in the morning.

She thinks there is a bitter irony in things, a bitter irony in the way the world talks of good and bad women. She would have publicly disgraced Mrs. Erlynne in her own house, and Mrs. Erlynne accepts disgrace in the house of another to save her. She is crying when Lord Windermere enters. He thinks she has been doing too much and proposes going away for a rest. She wants to go but says there is some one she must see first, some one who has been kind to her. She will tell him who it is, but asks him to love her as he used to do. He guesses that she is thinking of Mrs. Erlynne, who, he says, she is never to see again.

Lord W. [*holding her hand*]. Margaret, I thought Mrs. Erlynne was a woman more sinned against than sinning, as the phrase goes. I thought she wanted to be good, to get back into a place that she had lost by a moment's folly, to lead again a decent life. I believed what she told me—I was mistaken in her. She is bad—as bad as a woman can be.

Lady W. Arthur, Arthur, don't talk so bitterly about any woman. I don't think now that people can be divided into the good and the bad, as though they were two separate races or creations. What are called good women may have terrible things in them, mad moods of recklessness, assertion, jealousy, sin. Bad women, as they are termed, may have in them sorrow, repentance, pity, sacrifice. And I don't think Mrs. Erlynne a bad women—I know she's not.

Lord W. My dear child, the woman's impossible.

Lord Windermere is protesting that she cannot see the woman again when Mrs. Erlynne is announced. He says she may be on the brink of a great sorrow, and begs her not to go to meet it. Mrs. Erlynne enters. She says she has come to return the fan and say good-bye. She is going to live abroad again as the English climate doesn't suit her. It is her heart that is affected. She asks for a photograph of Lady Windermere with her little boy. Lady Windermere goes out to get one.

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Lord W. I can't bear to see you with her. Besides, you have not told me the truth, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. E. I have not told *her* the truth, you mean.

Lord W. I sometimes wish you had. I should have been spared then the misery, the anxiety, the annoyance of the last six months. But rather than my wife should know—that the mother whom she was taught to consider as dead, the mother whom she has mourned as dead, is living—a divorced woman going about under an assumed name, a bad woman preying upon life, as I know you now to be—rather than that. I was ready to supply you with money to pay bill after bill, extravagance after extravagance, to risk what occurred yesterday, the first quarrel I have ever had with my wife. You don't understand what that means to me. How could you? But I tell you that the only bitter words that ever came from those sweet lips of hers were on your account, and I hate to see you next her. You sully the innocence that is in her. And then I used to think that with all your faults you were frank and honest. You are not.

He says that an hour after leaving his wife's ball, to which she made him get her an invitation—her daughter's ball, she corrects him—he finds her in a man's rooms, disgraced before every one. Therefore he has a right to look upon her as a worthless, vicious woman. She has no right to claim her daughter, whom she abandoned for a lover, who in turn abandoned her.

Mrs. E. [*rising*]. Do you count that to his credit, Lord Windermere—or to mine?

Lord W. To his, now that I know you.

Mrs. E. Take care—you had better be careful.

Lord W. Oh, I am not going to mince words for you. I know you thoroughly.

Mrs. E. [*looking at him steadily*]. I question that.

Lord W. I *do* know you. For twenty years of your life you lived without your child. One day you read in the papers that she had married a rich man. You saw your hideous chance. You knew that to spare her the ignominy of learning that a woman like you was her mother, I would endure anything. You began your blackmailing.

Mrs. E. [*shrugging her shoulders*]. Don't use ugly

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PEDRO DE CORDOBA AND MARGARET ANGLIN

Lord W. Rather than my wife should know—that the mother whom she had mourned as dead is living—a divorced woman going about under an assumed name, a bad woman, preying upon life, as I know you now to be—I was ready to risk the first quarrel I have ever had with my wife

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words, Windermere. They are vulgar. I saw my chance, it is true, and took it.

Lord W. Yes, you took it—and spoiled it all last night by being found out.

Mrs. E. [*with a strange smile*]. You are quite right, I spoiled it all last night.

Mrs. Erlynne assures him that she is going to pass entirely out of the lives of himself and his wife. Her coming was a mistake. She discovered that last night. It was a fatal mistake, he says. Almost fatal, she replies with a smile. He regrets that he did not tell his wife the whole thing at once. She says that, on her part, it is her bad actions that she regrets, not her good ones. Finally he says he has decided to tell his wife; it will cause her infinite pain, but it is right that she should know.

Mrs. E. [*going up to him*]. If you do, I will make my name so infamous that it will mar every moment of her life. It will ruin her and make her wretched. If you dare to tell her, there is no depth of degradation I will not sink to, no pit of shame I will not enter. You shall not tell her —I forbid you.

Lord W. Why?

Mrs. E. [*after a pause*]. If I said to you that I cared for her, perhaps loved her even—you would sneer at me, wouldn't you?

Lord W. I should feel it was not true. A mother's love means devotion, unselfishness, sacrifice. What could you know of such things?

Mrs. E. You are right. What could I know of such things? Don't let us talk any more about *it*, as for telling my daughter who I am, that I do not allow. It is my secret, it is not yours. If I make up my mind to tell her, and I think I will, I shall tell her before I leave this house —if not, I shall never tell her.

Lord W. [*angrily*]. Then let me beg of you to leave our house at once. I will make your excuses to Margaret.

[*Enter* LADY W. *She goes over to* MRS. E. *with the photograph in her hand.* LORD W. *moves to back of sofa, and anxiously watches* MRS. E. *as the scene progresses.*]

Questioned by Mrs. Erlynne about her parents, Lady Windermere says that it caused her father too much pain

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to speak about her mother. His was the most ruined life she knows. Mrs. Erlynne rises to go. Lady Windermere asks her husband to see if Mrs. Erlynne's carriage has come.

Lady W. Yes, Arthur, do go, please. [LORD W. *hesitates for a moment and looks at* MRS. E. *She remains quite impassive. He leaves the room. To* MRS. E.]
Oh! What am I to say to you? You saved me last night! [*Goes toward her.*]

Mrs. E. Hush—don't speak of it.

Lady W. I must speak of it. I can't let you think that I am going to accept this sacrifice. I am not. It is too great. I am going to tell my husband everything. It is my duty.

Mrs. E. It is not your duty—at least you have duties to others besides him. You say you owe me something?

Lady W. I owe you everything.

Mrs. E. Then pay your debt by silence. That is the only way in which it can be paid. Don't spoil the one good thing I have done in my life by telling it to any one. Promise me that what passed last night will remain a secret between us. You must not bring misery into your husband's life. Why spoil his love? You must not spoil it. Love is easily killed. Oh, how easily love is killed! Pledge me your word, Lady Windermere, that you will *never* tell him. I insist upon it.

Lady W. [*with bowed head*]. It is your will, not mine.

Mrs. E. Yes, it is my will. And never forget your child—I like to think of you as a mother. I like you to think of yourself as one.

Lady W. [*looking up*]. I always will now. Only once in my life I have forgotten my own mother—that was last night. Oh, if I had remembered her, I should not have been so foolish, so wicked.

Mrs. E. [*with a slight shudder*]. Hush, last night is quite over.

Enter LORD W.

Mrs. Erlynne asks for the fan as a keepsake and Lady Windermere gives it to her. Lord Augustus Lorton is announced. He comes in.

Lord Augustus. Good morning, dear boy. Good morn-

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ing, Lady Windermere. [*Sees* MRS. ERLYNNE.] Mrs. Erlynne!

Mrs. E. How do you do, Lord Augustus? Are you quite well this morning?

Lord A. [*coldly*]. Quite well, thank you, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. E. You don't look at all well, Lord Augustus. You stop up too late—it is so bad for you. You really should take more care of yourself. Good-bye, Lord Windermere. [*Goes toward door with a bow to* LORD AUGUSTUS. *Suddenly smiles, and looks back at him.*] Lord Augustus! Won't you see me to my carriage? You might carry the fan.

Lord W. Allow me!

Mrs. E. No, I want Lord Augustus. I have a special message for the dear Duchess. Won't you carry the fan, Lord Augustus?

Lord A. If you really desire it, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. E. [*laughing*]. Of course I do. You'll carry it so] gracefully. You would carry off anything gracefully, dear Lord Augustus. [*When she reaches the door she looks back for a moment at* LADY W. *Their eyes meet. Then she turns, and exits, followed by* LORD A.]

Lady W. You will never speak against Mrs. Erlynne again, Arthur, will you?

Lord W. [*gravely*]. She is better than one thought her.

Lady W. She is better than I am.

Lord W. [*smiling as he strokes her hair*]. Child, you and she belong to different worlds. Into your world evil has never entered.

Lady W. Don't say that, Arthur. There is the same world for all of us, and good and evil, sin and innocence, go through it hand in hand. To shut one's eyes to half of life that one may live securely is as though one blinded one's self that one might walk with more safety in a land of pit and precipice.

Lord W. [*moves down with her*]. Darling, why do you say that?

Lady W. [*sits on sofa*]. Because I, who had shut my eyes to life, came to the brink. And one who had separated us——

Lord W. We were never parted.

Lady W. We never must be again. Oh, Arthur, don't

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love me less, and I will trust you more. I will trust you absolutely. Let us go to Selby. In the Rose Garden at Selby, the roses are white and red.

Enter LORD A.

Lord A. Arthur, she has explained everything! [LADY W. *looks horribly frightened.* LORD W. *starts.* LORD A. *takes* LORD W. *by the arm, and brings him to front of stage.*] My dear fellow, she has explained every demmed thing. We all wronged her immensely. It was entirely for my sake she went to Darlington's rooms—called first at the club. Fact is, wanted to put me out of suspense, and being told I had gone on, followed—naturally—frightened when she heard a lot of men coming in—retired to another room—I assure you, most gratifying to me, the whole thing. We all behaved brutally to her. She is just the woman for me. Suits me down to the ground. All the condition she makes is that we live out of England—a very good thing, too!—Demmed clubs, demmed climate, demmed cooks, demmed everything! Sick of it all.

Lady W. [*frightened*]. Has Mrs. Erlynne——?

Lord A. [*advancing toward her with a bow*]. Yes, Lady Windermere, Mrs. Erlynne has done me the honor of accepting my hand.

Lord W. Well, you are certainly marrying a very clever woman.

Lady W. [*taking her husband's hand*]. Ah! you're marrying a very good woman.

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THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY*

By Sir Arthur Wing Pinero

First played in London at the St. James Theatre on May 27, 1893.

Argument: Aubrey Tanqueray, a wealthy widower, marries a woman who has posed as the wife of various men and now passionately desires to live down her past and command social respect. She is made unhappy because people shun her, and then Aubrey's daughter falls in love with one of her former lovers and discovers the secret. Will the girl's engagement be broken off, and how will the exposure effect Mrs. Tanqueray?

The belief that a man's marriage, in nine cases out of ten, severs more close ties than it makes for him is uppermost in Aubrey Tanqueray's mind as he tells his two old friends, Dr. Gordon Jayne and Frank Misquith, that he is going to be married the next day. They are taken entirely by surprise. Furthermore, his marriage, he says, is not even of the conventional sort likely to satisfy society; their wives may not like the lady he is going to marry. And he tells them nothing of her except that her name will be Mrs. Aubrey Tanqueray.

They have just finished dinner in Aubrey's luxurious chambers in the Albany when Cayley Drummle arrives. His excuse for not having come earlier is that old Lady Orreyed sent word to him that she was in sad trouble. Upon reaching her house he found that her son George "was a thing of the past," dead in the worst sense, for he had married Mabel Hervey, who might be described in police reports as an actress, and is curiously beautiful, flaxen, feebly frolicsome, and anybody's property.

Aubrey excuses himself to write a note or two which he

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is afraid he may forget, and goes to the other end of the room. He frowns upon overhearing certain remarks concerning Orreyed's marriage, such as that Orreyed has plunged into the one social Dead Sea whence none emerge, and finally he goes into another room. Misquith and Jayne impart the news concerning him to Drummle. They fear a mésalliance with a dairymaid or anæmic little shop-girl. Aubrey, who is forty-three, they say, is at the dangerous age.

Drummle declares that Aubrey's second marriage mustn't be another mistake. His first, twenty years ago, was to a woman of the cold sort, all marble arms and black velvet; kissing her would have caused chapped lips. Aubrey, poor wretch, had reckoned that in the early days of marriage she would thaw. But she didn't. However, in time, a child came—a daughter. That did not improve matters.

Drummle. Not a bit of it; it made matters worse. Frightened at her failure to stir up in him some sympathetic religious belief, she determined upon strong measures with regard to the child. He opposed her for a miserable year or so, but she wore him down, and the insensible little brat was placed in a convent, first in France, then in Ireland. Not long afterward the mother died, strangely enough of fever, the only warmth I believe that ever came to that woman's body.

The daughter is now nineteen. She professes to have found her true vocation in a religious life, and within a month or two will take the final vows. When Aubrey tried to gain his girl's confidence and affection he was too late; he found he was dealing with the spirit of the mother.

Misquith and Jayne go early and Aubrey talks more confidentially to Drummle. The lady he is going to marry is one whom Drummle had known as Mrs. Jarman, and by at least two other names at different times. She is really Miss Paula Ray. Drummle expresses regret for the way in which he spoke of George Orreyed's marriage. Aubrey admits it to be natural that Drummle should compare Lady Orreyed and Miss Ray; to him all women who have been roughly treated, and have dared to survive by borrowing a little philosophy from the men, are alike. Drummle replies that there is a form of chivalry which he

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gravely distrusts, especially in a man of their age. He has hardly left when Miss Ray comes to see Aubrey.

Miss Ray is a young woman of about twenty-seven, beautiful, fresh, innocent-looking. She is in superb evening dress. She tells Aubrey that she forgot to order her dinner and has been sitting at home with her toes on the dining-room fender, dreaming of a lovely dinner party with him opposite her at the end of a very long table. They had been married five years. And at each side of them was the nicest set imaginable, the sort of men and women who can't be imitated.

Paula. Well, although we had been married only such a few years, I seemed to know by the look on their faces that none of our guests had ever heard of anything—anything—anything peculiar about the fascinating hostess.

Aubrey. That's just how it will be, Paula. The world moves so quickly. That's just how it will be.

She awoke from her dream in a fit of the shivers and scribbled him a letter. She offers it to him. It contains an account of all her adventures; so that if there is anything that she hasn't told him about already he shall not hear of it first from others. She says that after he has read it, at the very last moment if he feels that he oughtn't to go to church with her to send a messenger, and she will take the blow.

Rather than have Aubrey regret marrying her, she says, she would have him treat her the way the others have done. He replies that he cannot bear to hear her always talking about what is done with; they must promise each other to forget, and they are bound to be happy. He burns the letter. She thinks he might have thanked her, and said she was very generous. Evidently he doesn't know what it cost her to make such an offer as she did, when she wants so to be married.

She did not imagine that Aubrey would behave like the others, but she had thought what she would do at the end of it if he should. Taking a flower from her bodice, she puts it in his buttonhole as she says she is certain she should make away with herself if anything serious happened to her and warns him to keep her always happy.

Paula. I know I couldn't swallow a second big dose of misery. I know that if ever I felt wretched again—truly

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wretched—I should take a leaf out of Connie Tirlemont's book. You remember? They found her—— [*With a look of horror.*]

Aub. For God's sake, don't let your thoughts run on such things!

Paula [*laughing*]. Ha, ha, how scared you look! There, think of the time! Dearest, what will my coachman say? My cloak!

When she has gone Aubrey finds a letter from his daughter, Ellean, on the mantelpiece. She says she believes her mother in heaven has told her to return to him in his loneliness. She no longer feels fitted for the solemn life in the convent, and asks if he will receive her.

Aubrey's country house is in Surrey, near Willowmere. Aubrey and Paula are at breakfast in a charming and graceful morning-room. Through large recessed windows is obtained a view of extensive grounds. It is a morning in early spring. Paula is piqued because Aubrey makes so many observations regarding Ellean, asking first if Paula has seen her and then saying he hopes she wrapped up well for her walk. Paula informs him that she ran about the lawn the evening before in satin slippers, and inquires if he was anxious about her. She melts upon hearing that he was.

Among Aubrey's letters is one from Cayley Drummle, who is visiting near by at the house of Mrs. Cortelyon. Paula shows petulance at mention of the lady, for Mrs Cortelyon has not called since they "threw out roots" in "this deadly lively soil."

Paula. Oh, I know she's an old acquaintance of yours —and of the first Mrs. Tanqueray. And she joins the rest of them in slapping the second Mrs. Tanqueray in the face. However, I have my revenge—she's six-and-forty, and I wish nothing worse to happen to any woman.

Drummle has written that Mrs. Cortelyon is going to town and his visit is at an end. He is coming over to call. Aubrey is delighted at the prospect of getting Drummle to visit them and says he will amuse Paula, too.

Paula. Because you find a companion, shall I be boisterously hilarious?

Aub. Come, come! He talks London, and you know you like that.

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Paula. London! London or Heaven! Which is farther from me?

There is a letter lying on the table, addressed to Lady Orreyed, which catches Aubrey's eye. Paula wrote it before breakfast. Aubrey is not pleased, and Paula asks why he is always so cutting about Mabel, with whom everything is altered now. She is a kind-hearted girl, and even thinks of letting her hair go back to brown. He turns away with a despairing exclamation.

Paula. You drive me mad sometimes with the tone you take about things! Great goodness! if you come to that, George Orreyed's wife isn't a bit worse than yours! [*He faces her suddenly.*] I suppose I needn't have made that observation.

Aub. No, there was scarcely a necessity.

He throws the letter on to the table, and takes up the newspaper.

Paula. I am very sorry.

Aub. All right, dear.

Paula [*trifling with the letter*]. I—I'd better tell you what I've written. I meant to do so, of course. I—I've asked the Orreyeds to come and stay with us. [*He looks at her, and lets the paper fall to the ground in a helpless way.*] George was a great friend of Cayley's; I'm sure *he* would be delighted to meet them here.

Aub. [*laughing mirthlessly*]. Ha, ha, ha! They say Orreyed has taken to tippling at dinner. Heavens above!

Paula. Oh! I've no patience with you! You'll kill me with this life! [*She selects some flowers from a vase on the table, cuts and arranges them, and fastens them in her bodice.*] What is my existence, Sunday to Saturday? In the morning, a drive down to the village, with the groom, to give my orders to the tradespeople. At lunch, you and Ellean. In the afternoon, a novel, the newspapers: if fine, another drive—*if* fine! Tea—you and Ellean. Then two hours of dusk; then dinner—you and Ellean. Then a game of Bésique, you and I, while Ellean reads a religious book in a dull corner. Then a yawn from me, another from you, a sigh from Ellean; three figures suddenly rise—"Good-night, good-night, good-night!" [*Imitating a kiss.*] "God bless you!" Ah!

Aub. Yes, yes, Paula—yes, dearest—that's what it is

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now. But, by-and-by, if people begin to come round us——

Paula. Hah! That's where we've made the mistake, my friend Aubrey! [*Pointing to the window.*] Do you believe these people will *ever* come round us? Your former crony, Mrs. Cortelyon? Or the grim old vicar, or that wife of his whose huge nose is positively indecent? Or the Ullathornes, or the Gollans, or Lady William Petres? I know better! And when the young ones gradually take the place of the old, there will still remain the sacred tradition that the dreadful person who lives at the top of the hill is never, under any circumstances, to be called upon! And so we shall go on here, year in and year out, until the sap is run out of our lives, and we're stale and dry and withered from sheer, solitary respectability. Upon my word, I wonder we didn't see that we should have been far happier if we'd gone in for the devil-may-care, *café*-living sort of life in town! After all, *I* have a set, and you might have joined it. It's true, I did want, dearly, dearly to be a married woman, but where's the pride in being a married woman among married women who are—married! If—— [*Seeing that* AUBREY'S *head has sunk into his hands.*] Aubrey! My dear boy! You're not crying?

He looks up with a flushed face. Ellean enters, dressed very simply for walking. She is a low-voiced, grave girl of about nineteen, with a face somewhat resembling a madonna. Toward Paula her manner is cold and distant. Paula puts her arms around Ellean and kisses her. Ellean makes little response.

Paula sits at the piano and rattles at a gay melody. Ellean, seeing that Paula's back is toward them, goes to Aubrey and kisses him. He returns the kiss almost furtively. He says that Paula is a little out of sorts and complains that she has no companion. Ellean replies that she is with Paula nearly all day, but she is afraid she is naturally rather silent.

Ellean goes out presently and Paula turns to inquire if the little confidence is over. She could feel it, like a pain between her shoulders. She can't keep her promise, she declares; she is jealous and it won't be smothered. She knows how he idolizes the girl. It doesn't make her less jealous because she knows that Ellean is good and sweet. There are two sorts of affection, she says: the love for a

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woman you respect, and the love for the woman you—love. But if Ellean cared for her a little she wouldn't be jealous.

Paula begs Aubrey to help her win Ellean over, to teach Ellean that it is her duty to love her. The love of a nice woman who believed her to be like herself would do her a world of good. Aubrey asks her to have a little patience, and in the meantime to tear up the letter to Lady Orreyed. Paula consents. He thanks her and asks her to imagine "Saint Ellean" and that woman side by side. At this Paula breaks out passionately. It is Ellean he is considering, not her. It is all Ellean with him. She repeats the name again and again. Ellean comes in, thinking Paula called her. Aubrey turns away and goes out.

Paula admits that she has driven Aubrey distracted with her jealousy. Ellean has noticed it, and asks if Paula wants her to go away. That is not what Paula wants, but Ellean says that love is not a feeling that is under one's control. Perhaps she will alter as time goes on, she says. She didn't begin to love her father until a few months ago, and then she obeyed her mother. She has not been bidden to love Paula.

Dreams are only a hash-up of one's day thoughts, according to Paula. She implores Ellean to regard her as a second mother, although there are only a few years between them. But Paula is much older in experience.

Paula. Perhaps you think I'm odd—not nice. Well, the fact is I've two sides to my nature, and I've let the one almost smother the other. A few years ago I went through some trouble, and since then I haven't shed a tear. I believe if you put your arms round me just once I should run upstairs and have a good cry. There, I've talked to you as I've never talked to a woman in my life. Ellean, you seem to fear me. Don't! Kiss me!

With a cry, almost of despair, Ellean turns from Paula and sinks on to the settee, covering her face with her hands.

Paula [*indignantly*]. Oh! Why is it! How dare you treat me like this? What do you mean by it? What do you mean?

When Drummle arrives Paula has a little chat with him at first by herself. She tells him she is having a dog's life. She is sleek, well-kept, well-fed, never without a bone to

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gnaw and fresh straw to lie upon. She recalls the jolly times on Peter Jarman's yacht. Suddenly she stops short, seeing Drummle staring at her.

Drummle accepts Aubrey's invitation to stay a month. Paula is quite delighted and goes to give orders for the larder. Aubrey confides in Drummle that he is distracted by the question whether he ought to expose Ellean to the influence of Paula's light, careless nature. Drummle seems rather shocked. Aubrey longs to urge Ellean to break down the reserve that keeps her apart from Paula, but somehow he can't do it, Paula has such curious, warped notions.

Aub. They are not mere worldly thoughts—unless, good God! they belong to the little hellish world which our blackguardism has created: no, her ideas have too little calculation in them to be called worldly. But it makes it the more dreadful that such thoughts should be ready, spontaneous; that expressing them has become a perfectly natural process; that her words, acts even, have almost lost their proper significance for her, and seem beyond her control. Ah, and the pain of listening to it all from the woman one loves, the woman one hoped to make happy and contented, who is really and truly a good woman, as it were, maimed! Well, this is my burden, and I shouldn't speak to you of it but for my anxiety about Ellean. Ellean! What is to be her future? It is in my hands; what am I to do? Cayley, when I remember how Ellean comes to me, from another world I always think—when I realize the charge that's laid on me, I find myself wishing, in a sort of terror, that my child were safe under the ground!

Drummle is inclined to think Aubrey is making a mistake, not in regarding Ellean as an angel, but in thinking it would be possible for her to go through life without getting her white robe a little dusty at the hem. There are two courses open to Aubrey, he says, either to restrict Ellean to an earthly paradise, which will necessarily be somewhat limited, or to treat her as an ordinary flesh and blood young woman, and give her the advantages of that society to which she properly belongs.

It seems inevitable to Aubrey that if Ellean is to go among men and women, sooner or later she will learn the story of poor Paula's old life. For that reason, Drummle

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thinks, she should have some knowledge of the world to help her understand such a thing; philosophy is toleration, and that is only a step from forgiveness. But Aubrey asks what means he has now of placing his daughter in the world he has left.

This question is answered presently by an offer made by Mrs. Cortelyon. Paula receives her neighbor very frigidly, says she doesn't remember her having called before, although they have been there two months, and guesses that it is because Mrs. Cortelyon has been ill. She declares that Mrs. Cortelyon looks dreadfully pulled down. Mrs. Cortelyon speaks of her affection for the former mistress of the house. She has come to ask Aubrey and Paula to let her take Ellean with her to Paris and afterward keep her with her in town during the season.

Paula looks about in suppressed excitement, suspecting that the matter has been arranged behind her back. It rests with Aubrey she says, whether she is to lose Ellean. Upon Aubrey's pointing out that she could see Ellean constantly in town, she remarks sarcastically that she didn't know she was going to be allowed that privilege. Aubrey no sooner accepts for Ellean than Paula rises, striking the table with her clenched hand, and exclaims, "That decides it!" There is a general movement of surprise. Mrs. Cortelyon says there is barely time for Ellean to make preparations. Paula goes and looks out of a window without saying good-bye to Mrs. Cortelyon.

As soon as she is alone Paula turns with a fierce cry and hurriedly takes off her hat and coat, which she had put on to go for a drive. As Aubrey returns to the room she warns him to be careful what he says to her. She has never felt as she does just now except once before in her life. She gives the letter that she wrote to Lady Orreyed to a servant to mail. Aubrey protests and tells her to call the man back, which she will not do. In that case, he says, he will do so himself. She retorts that if he stops the letter she will walk out of the house.

Paula. Insult me again, and upon my word, I'll go straight out of the house!

Aub. Insult you?

Paula. Insult me! What else is it? My God! what else is it? What do you mean by taking Ellean from me?

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Aub. Listen!

Paula. Listen to *me!* And how do you take her? You pack her off in the care of a woman who has deliberately held aloof from me, who's thrown mud at me! Yet this Cortelyon creature has only to put foot here once to be entrusted with the charge of the girl you know I dearly want to keep near me!

Aub. Paula, dear! hear me——

Paula. Ah! of course, of course! I can't be so useful to your daughter as such people as this; and so I'm to be given the go-by for any town friend of yours who turns up and chooses to patronize us! Hah! Very well, at any rate, as you take Ellean from me you justify my looking for companions where I can most readily find 'em.

Aub. You wish me to fully appreciate your reason for sending that letter to Lady Orreyed?

Paula. Precisely—I do.

Aub. And could you, after all, go back to associates of that order? It's not possible!

Paula [*mockingly*]. What, not after the refining influence of these intensely respectable surroundings? [*Going to the door.*] We'll see!

Aub. Paula!

Paula [*violently*]. We'll see!

[*She goes out. He stands still, looking after her.*]

Lady Orreyed, a pretty, affected doll of a woman, with a mincing voice and hair still flaxen, has become one of the adornments of the drawing-room at the Tanquerays' after dinner. Paula is pale, worn, and thoroughly unhappy looking.

Sir George Orreyed comes in from the garden through a large French window. He is a man of about thirty-five, with a low forehead, a receding chin, a vacuous expression, and an ominous redness about the nose. "Here's Dodo," remarks Lady Orreyed. Sir George observes that the flies under the veranda "make you swear." He refuses coffee, as it is getting near time for a whiskey and potass, declares that "Birdie looks rippin' to-night," referring to his wife, and, composing himself upon the settee, presently falls asleep.

Lady O. Sit down, old girl, don't be so fidgety. [PAULA *sits on the upper seat of the ottoman.*] Of course, it's my

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duty, as an old friend, to give you a good talking to. [PAULA *glares at her suddenly and fiercely.*] But, really, I've found one gets so many smacks in the face through interfering in matrimonial squabbles that I've determined to drop it.

Paula. I think you're wise.

Lady O. However, I must say that I wish you'd look at marriages in a more solemn light—just as I do, in fact. It is such a beautiful thing, marriage, and if people in our position don't respect it, and set a good example by living happily with their husbands, what can you expect from the middle classes? When did this sad state of affairs between you and Aubrey actually begin?

It was a fortnight and three days before. They left off speaking the day Paula wrote asking the Orreyeds to visit them. Lady Orreyed comments that it is lucky for Paula she was able to pop down. She says she doesn't want to crow over Paula, but she has a perfect husband. Sir George is now fast asleep, his head thrown back and his mouth open, looking hideous. She admits that she and Dodo do have little differences about the amount of jewelry that she should acquire. In fact, they had a little set-to that morning, and Dodo broke two chairs, he was in such a rage.

Lady O. You know, poor Dodo can't lose his temper without smashing something; if it isn't a chair, it's a mirror; if it isn't that, it's china—a bit of Dresden for choice. Dear old pet! he loves a bit of Dresden when he's furious. He doesn't really throw things *at* me, dear; he simply lifts them up and drops them, like a gentleman. I expect our room upstairs will look rather wrecky before I get that tiara.

Paula. Excuse the suggestion: perhaps your husband can't afford it.

Lady O. Oh, how dreadfully changed you are, Paula! Dodo can always mortgage something, or borrow of his ma. What *is* coming to you!

Paula sits at the piano and as she plays Aubrey and Drummle appear outside the window and stand there talking. Aubrey calls attention to Paula's ill and wretched appearance and asks Drummle to talk to her again. They come in and Aubrey takes Lady Orreyed and

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George away to the billiard-room. Drummle learns from Paula that her difference with Aubrey is getting on toward three weeks.

Her only response to his plea to end the quarrel is that he talks exactly like a very romantic old lady. It would give him a grandmotherly satisfaction, he replies, if he could see them at peace, for he is going the next day. The Orreyeds are no consolation to her. She lies awake hating them now, although it was she who wanted them.

Paula. Heavens! that doesn't make me like them better. Somehow or another, I—I've outgrown these people. This woman—I used to think her "jolly!"—sickens me. I can't breathe when she's near me: the whiff of her handkerchief turns me faint! And she patronizes me by the hour, until I—I feel my nails growing longer with every word she speaks!

Drum. My dear lady, why on earth don't you say all this to Aubrey?

Paula. Oh, I've been such an utter fool, Cayley!

Drum. [*soothingly*]. Well, well, mention it to Aubrey!

Paula. No, no, you don't understand. What do you think I've done?

She confides in him that she has intercepted letters from Mrs. Cortelyon and Ellean to Aubrey. None came to her. She slipped them into her pocket, out of malice, and is now carrying them about in her bodice. They are scorching her, she says, like a mustard plaster. It is the most caddish thing she ever did in her life, but how is she to get rid of them? She declares she cannot give them to Aubrey now, and Drummle refuses to make the explanation for her. He begs her to let him call Aubrey.

Paula. Now! What do you think a woman's made of? I couldn't stand it, Cayley. I haven't slept for nights; and last night there was thunder, too! I believe I've got the horrors.

Drum. [*taking the little hand-mirror from the table*]. You'll sleep well enough when you deliver those letters. Come, come, Mrs. Aubrey—a good night's rest! [*Holding the mirror before her face.*] It's quite time.

[*She looks at herself for a moment, then snatches the mirror from him.*]

Paula. You brute, Cayley, to show me that!

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Drummle goes out quickly. A moment later Aubrey enters the room. Paula hands him the letters with face averted, and tells him that she supposes she concealed them to make him anxious and unhappy. He replies gently that it doesn't matter.

Paula. Oh, but I suppose silent reproaches are really the severest. And then, naturally, you are itching to open your letters. [*She crosses the room as if to go.*]

Aub. Paula! [*She pauses.*] Surely, surely, it's all over now?

Paula. All over! [*Mockingly.*] Has my step-daughter returned then? When did she arrive? I haven't heard of it!.

He asks her why they should grudge Ellean the little pleasure she is likely to have. If Paula is interested in Ellean, he says, why cannot she see how useful Mrs. Cortelyon's good offices are? And at the end of the season Ellean is to come back to them.

Paula. Oh! I knew it. You're only fooling me; you put me off with any trash. I believe you've sent Ellean away, not for the reasons you give, but because you don't consider me a decent companion for her, because you're afraid she might get a little of her innocence rubbed off in my company! Come, isn't that the truth? Be honest. Isn't that it?

Aub. Yes.

[*There is a moment's silence on both sides.*]

Paula [*with uplifted hands as if to strike him*]. Oh!

Aub. [*taking her by the wrists*]. Sit down. Sit down. [*He puts her into a chair; she shakes herself free with a cry.*] Now listen to me. Fond as you are, Paula, of harking back to your past, there's one chapter of it you always let alone. I've never asked you to speak of it; you've never offered to speak of it. I mean the chapter that relates to the time when you were—like Ellean. [*She attempts to rise; he restrains her.*] No, no.

Paula. I don't choose to talk about that time. I won't satisfy your curiosity.

Aub. My dear Paula, I have no curiosity—I know what you were at Ellean's age. I'll tell you. You hadn't a thought that wasn't a wholesome one, you hadn't an impulse that didn't tend toward good, you never harbored

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a notion you couldn't have gossiped about to a parcel of children. [*She makes another effort to rise; he lays his hand lightly on her shoulder.*] And this was a very few years back—there are days now when you look like a schoolgirl—but think of the difference between the two Paulas. You'll have to think hard, because after a cruel life one's perceptions grow a thick skin. But, for God's sake, do think till you get these two images clearly in your mind, and then ask yourself what sort of a friend such a woman as you are to-day would have been for the girl of seven or eight years ago.

Paula [*rising*]. How dare you? I could be almost as good a friend to Ellean as her own mother would have been had she lived. I know what you mean. How dare you?

Aub. You say that; very likely you believe it. But you're blind, Paula; you're blind. You! Every belief that a young, pure-minded girl holds sacred—that you once held sacred—you now make a target for a jest, a sneer, a paltry cynicism. I tell you, you're not mistress any longer of your thoughts or your tongue. Why, how often, sitting between you and Ellean, have I seen her cheeks turn scarlet as you've rattled off some tale that belongs by right to the club or the smoking-room! Have you noticed the blush? If you have, has the cause of it ever struck you? And this is the girl you say you love, I admit that you *do* love, whose love you expect in return! Oh, Paula, I make the best, the only, excuse for you when I tell you you're blind!

Paula. Ellean—Ellean blushes easily.

Aub. You blushed as easily a few years ago.

She asks if he has finished his sermon and, as he turns from her with a gesture of despair, drops on the ottoman in a paroxysm of weeping, crying, "Oh, God! A few years ago!" She tells him not to come near her. After a little while she becomes calmer and says she wants him to get rid of the Orreyeds. Then, she asks him, when the time comes for Ellean to leave Mrs. Cortelyon, to give her another chance. This request made, she goes out.

Mrs. Cortelyon and Ellean are announced. They have been greatly worried at not hearing from Aubrey, especially as Mrs. Cortelyon has put an important point to him in her letters and has received no reply. They have had

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to come from Paris to see him. Ellean goes to take off her things. Mrs. Cortelyon explains that the girl has formed an attachment with a Captain Ardale, who won the Victoria Cross in India. Ellean was deeply stirred by the accounts of his heroism. When Ellean returns to the room Aubrey is just leaving to take Mrs. Cortelyon home, and he asks her to be very gentle with Paula.

No sooner is Ellean left alone than a rose is thrown in the window, and Hugh Ardale follows it. He is a handsome young man of about seven-and-twenty, with a boyish face and manner. Ellean tells him he must go away again at once, but he begs her to come out in the garden for five minutes. They hear some one coming and he says he will wait for her outside. Paula comes in.

Upon learning that Ellean does not mean to spend the season in London, Paula inquires eagerly if she has quarrelled with Mrs. Cortelyon. Ellean says that is not it. She startles Paula by going to her and kissing her.

El. I want to behave differently to you in the future. Is it too late?

Paula. Too—late? [*Impulsively kissing* ELLEAN *and crying.*] No—no—no! No—no!

El. Paula, don't cry.

Paula [*wiping her eyes*]. I'm a little shaky; I haven't been sleeping. It's all right—talk to me.

El. There is something I want to tell you——

Paula. Is there—is there?

[*They sit together on the ottoman,* PAULA *taking* ELLEAN'S *hand.*]

As soon as Paula discovers that Ellean is in love she exclaims in an excess of suspicion that of course that is why Ellean is willing to make friends with her, because she is going to leave them so soon; they took Ellean for a cold-blooded little saint, and it seems she was making a fool of them. The next moment Paula is all repentance. Learning that Hugh is outside, she is eager to meet him before Aubrey, and persuades Ellean to ask him in. He enters by the window.

El. Paula, this is Captain Ardale—Mrs. Tanqueray.

Paula rises and turns, and she and Hugh stand staring blankly at each other for a moment; then Paula advances and gives him her hand.

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Paula [*in a strange voice, but calmly*]. How do you do?

Hugh. How do you do?

Paula [*to* ELLEAN]. Mr. Ardale and I have met in London, Ellean. Er—Captain Ardale now?

Ellean does not think it unusual that Paula should wish to speak to Captain Ardale alone and leaves them together. In tense excitement Paula and Hugh exchange rapid questions and answers. He did not know that she had become Mrs. Tanqueray, nor had she heard of him since he went to India. Hugh is the one intimate friend of Paula's past of whom she has not informed Aubrey. She says she let the flat they had in Ethelbert Street and sold the furniture. She came across the key of the escritoire the other day in an old purse.

Paula. This will send me mad! [*Suddenly turning and standing over him.*] You—you beast, to crop up in my life again like this!

Hugh. I always treated you fairly.

Paula [*weakly*]. Oh! I beg your pardon—I know you did—I——

[*She sinks on to the settee crying hysterically.*]

Hugh. Hush!

Paula. She kissed me to-night! I'd won her over! I've had such a fight to make her love me! And now—just as she's beginning to love me, to bring this on her!

Hugh. Hush, hush! Don't break down!

Paula [*sobbing*]. You don't know! I—I haven't been getting on well in my marriage. It's been my fault. The life I used to lead spoilt me completely. But I'd made up my mind to turn over a new leaf from to-night. From to-night!

Hugh. Paula——

Paula. Don't you call me that!

Hugh insists that there is no reason for her to despair in this way; the chances are a hundred to one against any one turning up who knew them when they were together; they've simply got to hold their tongues. She cannot accept this view. She says that Mr. Tanqueray must be told.

Hugh. Your husband! What, and I lose Ellean! I lose Ellean!

Paula. You've got to lose her.

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Hugh. I won't lose her; I can't lose her!

It is in vain that he entreats her. He says that Ellean knows he was a bit wild at one time. He told her, and after a wretched day she promised to forgive him because of what he had done since in India. Should he lose her because he has been like other fellows? He hasn't been as rackety as a hundred men they could think of. He implores her not to pay him out for nothing. She repeats that she has got to tell Mr. Tanqueray, and with an oath he declares that she shall do nothing of the sort.

Paula. You shocking coward!

Hugh. If you dare! [*Going up to the window.*] Mind! If you dare!

Paula [*following him*]. Why, what would you do?

Hugh [*after a short pause, sullenly*]. Nothing. I'd shoot myself—that's nothing. Good-night.

Paula. Good-night.

He disappears. She walks unsteadily to the ottoman, and sits; and as she does so her hand falls upon the little silver mirror, which she takes up, staring at her own reflection.

Paula is still seated on the ottoman, looking vacantly before her with the little mirror in her hand, when Lady Orreyed returns to the room. Dodo, his lady reports, is in one of his "moods." It is so easy to make a gentleman look like a billiard marker that she wouldn't let him mark, and if poor Dodo has nothing to do he loses count, as you may say. Sir George comes in wretchedly fuddled, and watery-eyed over the doleful fact that his family ignores his existence. He has to be restrained from smashing ornaments, and is led off to bed by his attentive lady.

Paula tells Drummle that she is too tired to explain the reason for Mrs. Cortelyon's return with Ellean, and sends him out to meet Aubrey and get the news from him. She assures him wearily that she and Aubrey are good friends again. Drummle is hardly out of the room when Aubrey enters. He is surprised to learn that Paula has already met Captain Ardale. She asks him at once if he remembers the letter which she gave him the night before they were married and which he burnt. Hugh Ardale's name

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was in that letter. Aubrey recoils, saying he doesn't understand.

Paula. Well—Ardale and I once kept house together. [*He remains silent, not moving.*] Why don't you strike me? Hit me in the face—I'd rather you did! Hurt me! hurt me!

Aub. [*after a pause*]. What did you—and this man—say to each other—just now?

Paula. I—hardly—know.

Aub. Think!

Paula. The end of it all was that I—I told him I must inform you of—what had happened . . . he didn't want me to do that . . . I declared that I would . . . he dared me to. [*Breaking down.*] Let me alone! —oh!

A servant brings in a letter. It is from Hugh, telling Paula that he is going back to Paris to await there any communication that he may receive from her or her husband, and asking her to invent some explanation to Ellean. Ellean comes in to explain how Hugh happened to come to the house. Paula steals away, and Aubrey tells his daughter that something has come to his knowledge in relation to Captain Ardale which puts any further acquaintanceship between them out of the question. He asks her to trust him and to try to understand the depth of his love for her and the agony it gives him to hurt her. Ellean guesses that he has heard something against Hugh from Paula.

Aub. [*in a hard voice*]. I—I hope you—you'll refrain from rushing at conclusions. There's nothing to be gained by trying to avoid the main point, which is that you must drive Captain Ardale out of your thoughts. Understand that! You're able to obtain comfort from your religion, aren't you? I'm glad to think that's so. I talk to you in a harsh way, Ellean, but I feel your pain almost as acutely as you do. [*Going to the door.*] I—I can't say anything more to you to-night.

El. Father! [*He pauses at the door.*] Father, I'm obliged to ask you this; there's no help for it—I've no mother to go to. Does what you have heard about Captain Ardale concern the time when he led a wild, a dissolute life in London?

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Aubrey says it was his one great desire to keep her ignorant of evil, but that she says was impossible, and she is none the worse for knowing what evil is and detesting it. She sees in Hugh's career only that one week of heroism which brings him nearer the saints than fifty uneventful years of mere blamelessness would have done. Aubrey leaves her without further argument.

Ellean goes to the window and calls Paula, whom she accuses of listening to her conversation with her father. She thinks Paula was very eager to tell her tale, but Paula replies that as Ellean's stepmother she felt it her duty to say what she knew.

El. What you knew! Why, after all, what can you know? You can only speak from gossip, report hearsay. How is it possible that you—— [*She stops abruptly. The two women stand staring at each other for a moment; then* ELLEAN *backs away from* PAULA *slowly.*] Paula!

Paula. What—what's the matter?

El. You—you knew Captain Ardale in London?

Paula. Why—what do you mean?

El. Oh! [*She makes for the door, but* PAULA *catches her by the wrist.*]

Paula. You shall tell me what you mean!

El. Ah! [*Suddenly, looking fixedly into* PAULA'S *face.*] You know what I mean.

Paula. You accuse me!

El. It's in your face!

Paula [*hoarsely*]. You—you think I'm—that sort of creature, do you?

El. Let me go!

Paula. Answer me! You've always hated me! [*Shaking her.*] Out with it!

El. You hurt me!

Paula. You've always hated me! You shall answer me!

El. Well, then, I have always—always——

Paula. What?

El. I have always known what you were!

Ellean says that no one but Paula herself told her; from the first moment she saw Paula she knew she was altogether unlike the good women she had left; she saw at once what her father had done.

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Paula. It's a lie! It's a lie! [*Forcing* ELLEAN *down on her knees.*] You shall beg my pardon for it. [ELLEAN *utters a loud shriek of terror.*] Ellean, I'm a good woman! I swear I am! I've always been a good woman! You dare to say I've ever been anything else! It's a lie! [*Throwing her off violently.*]

Aubrey reënters the room. Paula staggers back and Aubrey raises Ellean, who says that there is nothing the matter, but that she does not wish to see Captain Ardale again. As Aubrey follows her to the door Paula tells him Ellean has guessed; the secret is written in her face.

Paula. She tells me so. She's right! I'm tainted through and through; anybody can find it out. You said much the same to me to-night.

If Ellean has such an idea they must drive it out of her head, he says. Paula declares that she and Ellean cannot live under the same roof any more. Aubrey hopes Ellean will go back to the convent, but Paula says if he wishes to keep Ellean and leave her he need not fear that she will go back to what she was. Aubrey begs her not to talk so. They will get out of that place and go abroad.

Paula. You'll never forget this, you know.

Aub. This?

Paula. To-night, and everything that's led up to it. Our coming here, Ellean, our quarrels—cat and dog—Mrs. Cortelyon, the Orreyeds, this man! What an everlasting nightmare for you!

Aub. Oh, we can forget it if we choose.

Paula. That was always your cry. How *can* one do it!

Aub. We'll make our calculations solely for the future, talk about the future, think about the future.

Paula. I believe the future is only the past again, entered through another gate.

This night, Paula insists, proves that they will always be reminded of what she was. The world is small. He doesn't think the world is so small.

Paula. Isn't it? The only great distances it contains are those we carry within ourselves—the distances that separate husbands and wives, for instance. And so it'll be with us. You'll do your best—oh, I know that—you're a good fellow. But circumstances will be too strong for you in the end, mark my words.

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Of course, Paula continues, she is pretty still, and a pretty woman is always endurable, but the lines of her face are getting deeper. Some day, perhaps very suddenly under a queer, fantastic light at night or in the glare of the morning, that horrid, irresistible truth that physical repulsion forces on men and women will come to him, and he will sicken at her. He utters an exclamation of protest.

Paula. You'll see me then, at last, with other people's eyes; you'll see me just as your daughter does now, as all wholesome folks see women like me. And I shall have no weapon to fight with—not one serviceable little bit of prettiness left me to defend myself with! A worn-out creature—broken up, very likely, some time before I ought to be—my hair bright, my eyes dull, my body too thin or too stout, my cheeks raddled and ruddled—a ghost, a wreck, a caricature, a candle that gutters, call such an end what you like! Oh, Aubrey, what shall I be able to say to you then? And this is the future you talk about! I know it—I know it! [*He is still sitting staring forward; she rocks herself to and fro as if in pain.*] Oh, Aubrey! Oh! Oh!

Aub. Paula! [*Trying to comfort her.*]

Paula. Oh, and I wanted so much to sleep to-night! [*Laying her head upon his shoulder. From the distance, in the garden, there comes the sound of* DRUMMLE'S *voice; he is singing as he approaches the house.*]

Evidently he doesn't know. Paula says she won't see him and goes out. As Drummle's voice comes nearer Aubrey snatches up a book from the table and makes a pretence of reading. In another moment or two Drummle appears at the window. He comes in. He says Mrs. Cortelyon thinks that Aubrey regards the affair between Ellean and Ardale favorably. He is going on to relate what she said of the young captain when Aubrey answers him abruptly.

Aub. Curse him! [*Hurling his book to the floor.*] Curse him! Yes, I do curse him—him and his class! Perhaps I curse myself, too, in doing it. He has only led "a man's life"—just as I, how many of us, have done! The misery he has brought on me and mine it's likely enough we, in our time, have helped to bring on others by this leading "a man's life!" But I do curse him for all that. My God,

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I've nothing more to fear—I've paid *my* fine! And so I can curse him in safety. Curse him! Curse him!

Drum. In Heaven's name, tell me what's happened?

Aub. [*gripping* DRUMMLE'S *arm*]. Paula! Paula!

Drum. What?

Aub. They met to-night here. They—they—they're not strangers to each other.

Drum. Aubrey!

Aub. Curse him! My poor wretched wife! My poor wretched wife!

[*The door opens and* ELLEAN *appears. The two men turn to her. There is a moment's silence.*]

El. Father . . . father——

Aub. Ellean?

El. I—I want you. [*He goes to her.*] Father . . . go to Paula! [*He looks into her face, startled.*] Quickly—quickly! [*He passes her to go out; she seizes his arm with a cry.*] No, no; don't go!

[*He shakes her off and goes.* ELLEAN *staggers back toward* DRUMMLE.]

Drum. [*to* ELLEAN]. What do you mean? What do you mean?

El. I—I went to her room—to tell her I was sorry for something I had said to her. And I *was* sorry. I heard the fall. I—I've seen her. It's horrible.

Drum. She—she has——

El. Killed—herself? Yes—yes. So everybody will say. But I know—I helped to kill her. If I'd only been merciful.

[*She faints upon the ottoman. He pauses for a moment irresolutely—then he goes to the door, opens it, and stands looking out.*]

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

By Oscar Wilde

First played in London at the St. James Theatre on February 14, 1895.

Argument: John Worthing, having invented an imaginary brother of the name of Ernest, became known as Ernest to Gwendolen Fairfax, with whom he fell in love. Algernon Moncrieff determines to impersonate the fictitious brother in order to introduce himself to John's ward, Cecily Cardew. The critical problem that forthwith arises is which young lady is engaged to Ernest.

Jack Worthing has come up to London from the country to propose to Gwendolen Fairfax, as he tells her cousin, Algernon Moncrieff, in the luxurious morning-room of Algernon's apartment in Half Moon Street. Algernon insists thereupon that Jack must clear up the whole question of "Cecily," and also explain why he is known as Ernest in town and Jack in the country.

Algernon. Now, go on! Tell me the whole thing. I may mention that I have always suspected you of being a confirmed and secret Bunburyist; and I am quite sure of it now.

Jack. Bunburyist? What on earth do you mean by a Bunburyist?

Alger. I'll reveal to you the meaning of that incomparable expression as soon as you are kind enough to inform me why you are Ernest in town and Jack in the country.

Jack. My dear fellow, there is nothing improbable about my explanation at all. In fact, it's perfectly ordinary. Old Mr. Thomas Cardew, who adopted me when I was a little boy, made me in his will guardian to his granddaughter, Miss Cecily Cardew. Cecily, who addresses me

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as uncle from motives of respect that you could not possibly appreciate, lives at my place in the country under the charge of her admirable governess, Miss Prism.

Alger. Where is that place in the country, by the way?

Jack. That is nothing to you, dear boy. You are not going to be invited. . . . I may tell you candidly that the place is not in Shropshire.

Alger. I suspected that, my dear fellow! I have Bunburyed all over Shropshire on two separate occasions. Now, go on. Why are you Ernest in town and Jack in the country?

Jack. My dear Algy, I don't know whether you will be able to understand my real motives. You are hardly serious enough. When one is placed in the position of a guardian, one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects. It's one's duty to do so. And as a high moral tone can hardly be said to conduce very much to either one's health or one's happiness, in order to get up to town I have always pretended to have a younger brother of the name of Ernest, who gets into the most dreadful scrapes. That, my dear Algy, is the whole truth, pure and simple.

Alger. The truth is rarely pure and never simple. Modern life would be very tedious if it were either, and modern literature a complete impossibility!

Jack. That wouldn't be a bad thing.

Alger. Literary criticism is not your forte, my dear fellow. Don't try it. You should leave that to people who haven't been to a university. They do it so well in the daily papers. What you really are is a Bunburyist. I was quite right in saying you were a Bunburyist. You are one of the most advanced Bunburyists I know.

Jack. What on earth do you mean?

Alger. You have invented a very useful younger brother called Ernest, in order that you may be able to come up to town as often as you like. I have invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury, in order that I may be able to go down into the country whenever I choose. Bunbury is perfectly invaluable. If it wasn't for Bunbury's extraordinary bad health, for instance, I shouldn't be able to dine with you at Willis's to-night, for I have been really engaged to Aunt Augusta for more than a week.

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Jack. I haven't asked you to dine with me anywhere to-night.

Alger. I know. You are absurdly careless about sending out invitations. It is very foolish of you. Nothing annoys people so much as not receiving invitations.

Jack agrees to take Algernon to dinner if Algernon will arrange an opportunity for him to propose to Gwendolen. He protests that he is not a Bunburyist at all, and that he is going to kill off his brother as Cecily is a little too much interested in him. Lady Bracknell and her daughter Gwendolen arrive.

Alger. I am afraid, Aunt Augusta, I shall have to give up the pleasure of dining with you to-night after all.

Lady Bracknell [*frowning*]. I hope not, Algernon. It would put my table completely out. Your uncle would have to dine upstairs. Fortunately he is accustomed to that.

Alger. It is a great bore, and, I need hardly say, a terrible disappointment to me, but the fact is I have just had a telegram to say that my poor friend Bunbury is very ill again. [*Exchanges glances with* JACK.] They seem to think I should be with him.

Lady. B. It is very strange. This Mr. Bunbury seems to suffer from curiously bad health.

Alger. Yes, poor Bunbury is a dreadful invalid.

Lady B. Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or die. This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life. I am always telling that to your poor uncle, but he never seems to take much notice . . . as far as any improvement in his ailments goes. I should be much obliged if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, for I rely on you to arrange my music for me. It is my last reception and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season when every one has practically said whatever they had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.

Oskar Wilde

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Alger. I'll speak to Bunbury, Aunt Augusta, if he is still conscious, and I think I can promise you he'll be all right by Saturday. Of course, the music is a great difficulty. You see, if one plays good music, people don't listen, and if one plays bad music people don't talk. But I'll run over the programme I've drawn out if you will kindly come into the next room for a moment.

Gwendolen warns Jack that her mother has a way of returning to a room suddenly, and he comes to the point. She avows that it was always her ideal to love some one of the name of Ernest. Incidentally, she cannot bear the name of Jack. At this juncture Lady Bracknell does return and discovers Mr. Jack Worthing on his knees, while Gwendolen toys with his locks.

Lady B. Mr. Worthing! Rise, sir, from that semi-recumbent posture. It is most indecorous.

Gwendolen. Mamma! [*He tries to rise; but she restrains him.*] I must beg you to retire. This is no place for you. Besides, Mr. Worthing has not quite finished yet.

Lady B. Finished what, may I ask?

Gwen. I am engaged to Mr. Worthing, Mamma. [*They rise together.*]

Lady B. Pardon me, you are not engaged to any one. When you do become engaged to some one, I or your father, should his health permit him, will inform you of the fact. An engagement should come on a young girl as a surprise, pleasant or unpleasant, as the case may be. It is hardly a matter that she could be allowed to arrange for herself . . . And now I have a few questions to put to you, Mr. Worthing. While I am making these inquiries, you, Gwendolen, will wait for me below in the carriage.

Gwen. [*reproachfully*]. Mamma!

Lady B. In the carriage, Gwendolen!

[GWENDOLEN *goes to the door. She and* JACK *blow kisses to each other behind* LADY BRACKNELL'S *back.* LADY BRACKNELL *looks vaguely about as if she could not understand what the noise was. Finally she turns round.*]

Gwendolen, the carriage!

Gwen. Yes, Mamma. [*Goes out, looking back at* JACK.]

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Lady B. [*sitting down*]. You can take a seat, Mr. Worthing.

Jack. Thank you, Lady Bracknell, I prefer standing.

Lady B. [*pencil and notebook in hand*]. I feel bound to tell you that you are not down on my list of eligible young men, although I have the same list as the dear Duchess of Bolton has. We work together, in fact. However, I am quite ready to enter your name, should your answers be what a really affectionate mother requires. Do you smoke?

Jack. Well, yes, I must admit I smoke.

Lady B. I am glad to hear it. A man should always have an occupation of some kind. There are far too many idle men in London as it is. How old are you?

Jack. Twenty-nine.

Lady B. A very good age to be married at. I have always been of opinion that a man who desires to get married should know either everything or nothing. Which do you know?

Jack [*after some hesitation*]. I know nothing, Lady Bracknell.

Lady B. I am pleased to hear it. I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit: touch it and the bloom is gone. The whole theory of modern education is radically unsound. Fortunately in England, at any rate, education produces no effect whatsoever. If it did, it would prove a serious danger to the upper classes, and probably lead to acts of violence in Grosvenor Square. What is your income?

Jack. Between seven and eight thousand a year.

Lady B. [*makes a note in her book*]. In land, or in investments?

Jack. In investments, chiefly.

Lady B. That is satisfactory. What between the duties expected of one during one's lifetime, and the duties exacted from one after one's death, land has ceased to be either a profit or a pleasure. It gives one position, and prevents one from keeping it up. That's all that can be said about land.

Jack. I have a country house with some land, of course, attached to it, about fifteen hundred acres, I be-

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lieve; but I don't depend on that for my real income. In fact, as far as I can make out, the poachers are the only people who make anything out of it.

Lady B. A country house! How many bedrooms? Well, that point can be cleared up afterward. You have a town house, I hope? A girl with a simple, unspoiled nature, like Gwendolen, could hardly be expected to reside in the country.

Jack. Well, I own a house in Belgrave Square, but it is let by the year to Lady Bloxam. Of course, I can get it back whenever I like, at six months' notice.

Lady B. Lady Bloxam? I don't know her.

Jack. Oh, she goes about very little. She is a lady considerably advanced in years.

Lady B. Ah, nowadays that is no guaranty of respectability of character. What number in Belgrave Square?

Jack. 149.

Lady B. [*shaking her head*]. The unfashionable side. I thought there was something. However, that could easily be altered.

Jack. Do you mean the fashion, or the side?

Lady B. [*sternly*]. Both, if necessary, I presume. Are your parents living?

Jack. I have lost both my parents.

Lady B. Both? . . . That seems like carelessness. Who was your father? He was evidently a man of some wealth. Was he born in what the radical papers call the purple of commerce, or did he rise from the ranks of the aristocracy?

Jack. I am afraid I really don't know. The fact is, Lady Bracknell, I said I had lost my parents. It would be nearer the truth to say that my parents seem to have lost me . . . I don't actually know who I am by birth. I was . . . well, I was found.

Lady B. Found!

Jack. The late Mr. Thomas Cardew, an old gentleman of a very kindly and charitable disposition, found me, and gave me the name of Worthing, because he happened to have a first-class ticket for Worthing in his pocket at the time. Worthing is a place in Sussex. It is a seaside resort.

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Lady B. Where did the charitable gentleman who had the first-class ticket for this seaside resort find you?

Jack [*gravely*]. In a hand bag.

Lady. B. A hand bag!

Jack [*very seriously*]. Yes, Lady Bracknell. I was in a hand bag—a somewhat large, black leather hand bag.

Lady B. In what locality did this Mr. James, or Thomas, Cardew come across this ordinary hand bag?

Jack. In the cloakroom at the Victoria station. It was given to him in mistake for his own.

Lady B. The cloakroom at the Victoria station?

Jack. Yes. The Brighton line.

Lady B. The line is immaterial. Mr. Worthing, I confess I feel somewhat bewildered by what you have just told me. To be born, or at any rate bred, in a hand bag, whether it had handles or not, seems to me to display a contempt for the ordinary decencies of family life that remind one of the worst excesses of the French revolution. And I presume you know what that unfortunate movement led to? As for the particular locality in which the hand bag was found, a cloakroom at a railway station might serve to conceal a social indiscretion—has probably been used for that purpose before now—but it could hardly be regarded as an assured basis for a recognized position in good society.

Jack. May I ask you then what you would advise me to do? I need hardly say I would do anything in the world to ensure Gwendolen's happiness.

Lady B. I would strongly advise you, Mr. Worthing, to try and acquire some relations as soon as possible, and to make a definite effort to produce at any rate one parent, of either sex, before the season is quite over.

Jack. Well, I don't see how I could possibly manage to do that. I can produce the hand bag at any moment. It is in my dressing-room at home. I really think that should satisfy you, Lady Bracknell.

Lady B. Me, sir! What has it to do with me? You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our only daughter—a girl brought up with the utmost care—to marry into a cloakroom, and form an alliance with a parcel? Good morning, Mr. Worthing!

Algernon is still curious about Cecily. Jack says she is

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excessively pretty and only just eighteen, and also that he will take good care that Algernon never sees her. Jack plans to kill off his fictitious brother at once. Gwendolen finds an opportunity to dash back and ask Jack his address in the country, which is the Manor House, Woolton, Hertfordshire. Algernon overhears and writes the address on his cuff. Jack takes Gwendolen back to the carriage. Algernon summons his servant.

Alger. To-morrow, Lane, I'm going Bunburying.

Lane. Yes, sir.

Alger. I shall probably not be back till Monday. You can put up my dress clothes, my smoking jacket, and all the Bunbury suits.

Lane. Yes, sir.

Alger. I hope to-morrow will be a fine day, Lane.

Lane. It never is, sir.

Alger. Lane, you're a perfect pessimist.

Lane. I do my best to give satisfaction, sir.

Enter JACK. LANE *goes off.*

Jack. There's a sensible, intellectual girl! The only girl I ever cared for in my life. [ALGERNON *is laughing immoderately.*] What on earth are you so amused at?

Alger. Oh, I'm a little anxious about poor Bunbury, that is all.

Jack. If you don't take care, your friend Bunbury will get you into a serious scrape some day.

Alger. I love scrapes. They are the only things that are never serious.

The garden at the Manor House in Woolton is an old-fashioned one, full of roses. A flight of gray stone steps leads up to the house. Basket chairs and a table covered with books are set under a large yew tree. The time of year is July.

Cecily, who does not like her German lessons, and thinks she looks quite plain after taking them, has succeeded in sending off Miss Prism for a walk with Canon Chasuble when Merriman enters and announces the arrival of Mr. Ernest Worthing with luggage. Cecily is vastly delighted.

ALGERNON *enters at once, looking very gay and debonair.*

Alger. You are my little cousin Cecily, I'm sure.

Cecily. You are under some strange mistake. I am

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not little. In fact, I believe I am more than usually tall for my age. [ALGERNON *is rather taken aback.*] But I am your cousin Cecily. You, I see from your card, are Uncle Jack's brother, my cousin Ernest, my wicked cousin Ernest.

Alger. Oh! I am not really wicked at all, cousin Cecily. You mustn't think that I am wicked.

Cecily. If you are not, then you certainly have been deceiving us all in a very inexcusable manner. I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy.

He hastens to correct himself. He has been rather reckless, very bad in his own small way. She cannot understand how he happens to be there, as his brother Jack went up to town to meet him and get his outfit to emigrate with to Australia. Nevertheless, she takes him into the house to get him something to eat. Miss Prism and the canon return.

Miss Prism. You are too much alone, dear Doctor Chasuble. You should get married. A misanthrope I can understand—a womanthrope, never!

Chasuble [*with a scholar's shudder*]. Believe me, I do not deserve so neologistic a phrase. The precept as well as the practice of the Primitive Church was distinctly against matrimony.

Miss P. [*sententiously*]. That is obviously the reason why the Primitive Church has not lasted up to the present day.

[*Enter* JACK *slowly from the back of the garden. He is dressed in the deepest mourning, with crêpe hat-band and black gloves.*]

Miss Prism and Doctor Chasuble utter expressions of surprise upon seeing him. They had not expected him back until Monday afternoon. He shakes Miss Prism's hand in a tragic manner, and replies sooner than he expected.

Chas. Dear Mr. Worthing, I trust this garb of woe does not betoken some terrible calamity?

Jack. My brother.

Miss P. More shameful debts and extravagance.

Chas. Still leading his life of pleasure?

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Jack [*shaking his head*]. Dead!

Chas. Your brother Ernest dead?

Jack. Quite dead.

Miss P. What a lesson for him! I trust he will profit by it.

Poor Ernest had many faults, says Jack, but it was a sad blow. While in Paris he was taken by a fatal chill. Jack changes the subject. He would like to get christened, and arranges to trot around to the rectory at five o'clock. Cecily comes out of the house.

Cecily. Uncle Jack! Oh, I am pleased to see you back. But what horrid clothes you have on! Do go and change them.

Miss P. Cecily!

Chas. My child! My child!

[CECILY *goes toward* JACK. *He kisses her brow in a melancholy manner.*]

Cecily. What is the matter, Uncle Jack? Do look happy! You look as if you had a toothache, and I have got such a surprise for you. Who do you think is in the dining-room? Your brother!

Jack. Who?

Cecily. Your brother Ernest. He arrived about an hour ago.

Jack. What nonsense! I haven't got a brother.

Cecily. Oh, don't say that. However badly he may have behaved to you in the past he is still your brother. You couldn't be so heartless as to disown him. I'll tell him to come out. And you will shake hands with him, won't you, Uncle Jack? [*Runs back into the house.*]

Chas. These are very joyful tidings.

Miss P. After we had all been resigned to his loss, his sudden return seems to me peculiarly distressing.

Jack. My brother is in the dining-room? I don't know what it all means. I think it is perfectly absurd.

Enter ALGERNON *and* CECILY, *hand in hand. They come slowly up to* JACK.

Jack. Good heavens! [*Motions* ALGERNON *away.*]

Alger. Brother John, I have come down from town to tell you that I am very sorry for all the trouble I have given you, and that I intend to lead a better life in the future. [JACK *glares at him and does not take his hand.*]

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Cecily. Uncle Jack, you are not going to refuse your own brother's hand?

Jack. Nothing will induce me to take his hand. I think his coming down here disgraceful. He knows perfectly well why.

Cecily. Uncle Jack, do be nice. There is some good in every one. Ernest has just been telling me about his poor invalid friend, Mr. Bunbury, whom he goes to visit so often. And surely there must be much good in one who is kind to an invalid, and leaves the pleasures of London to sit by a bed of pain.

Jack. Oh, he has been talking about Bunbury, has he?

Cecily. Yes, he has told me all about poor Mr. Bunbury and his terrible state of health.

Jack. Bunbury! Well, I won't have him talk to you about Bunbury or about anything else. It is enough to drive one perfectly frantic.

Alger. Of course, I admit that the faults were all on my side. But I must say that I think that brother John's coldness to me is peculiarly painful. I expected a more enthusiastic welcome, especially considering it is the first time I have come here.

Cecily. Uncle Jack, if you don't shake hands with Ernest I will never forgive you.

Jack. Never forgive me?

Cecily. Never, never, never!

Jack. Well, this is the last time I shall ever do it.

[*Shakes hands with* ALGERNON *and glares.*]

Chas. It's pleasant, is it not, to see so perfect a reconciliation? I think we might leave the two brothers together.

Miss P. Cecily, you will come with us.

Cecily. Certainly, Miss Prism. My little task of reconciliation is over.

Chas. You have done a beautiful action to-day, dear child.

Miss P. We must not be premature in our judgments.

Cecily. I feel very happy.

As soon as Jack has made arrangements to send Algernon back to town he goes in to change his clothes, and Cecily joins Algernon.

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Alger. Do you really keep a diary? I'd give anything to look at it. May I?

Cecily. Oh, no. You see, it is simply a very young girl's record of her own thoughts and expressions, and consequently meant for publication. When it appears in volume form I hope you will order a copy.

Algernon is just declaring his love when Merriman announces that the dog cart is ready to take him to the station.

Alger. Tell it to come around next week at the same hour.

Cecily. Uncle Jack would be very much annoyed if he knew you were staying on till next week at the same hour.

Alger. Oh, I don't care about Jack. I don't care for anybody in the whole world but you. I love you, Cecily. You will marry me, won't you?

Cecily. You silly boy! Of course. Why, we have been engaged for the last three months. Worn out by your entire ignorance of my existence, I determined to end the matter one way or the other, and after a long struggle with myself I accepted you under this dear old tree. I wrote always three times a week, and sometimes oftener.

Alger. Oh, do let me read the letters.

Cecily. Oh, I couldn't possibly. They would make you far too conceited. The three you wrote me after I had broken off the engagement are so beautiful, and so badly spelled, that even now I can hardly read them without crying a little.

Cecily confides in Algernon that it had always been a girlish dream of hers to love some one whose name was Ernest. She does not like the name Algernon. He rushes off in search of Doctor Chasuble to be rechristened.

Cecily is about to enter the proposal in her diary when Merriman informs her that a Miss Fairfax has just called to see Mr. Worthing. She supposes it is an elderly woman who is associated with Uncle Jack in some of his philanthropic work in London. Gwendolen comes in and introduces herself to Cecily. She is very curious about Cecily's presence at the house, and upon learning that she is Mr. Worthing's ward does not find that the news inspires her

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WILLIAM FAVERSHAM AS ALGERNON

Alger. Oh, I don't care about Jack. I don't care for anybody in the whole world but you. I love you, Cecily. You will marry me, won't you?

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with unmixed delight. She cannot help expressing a wish that Cecily were a little older than she seems to be, and not so very alluring in appearance.

Cecily. I think that whenever one has anything unpleasant to say one should always be quite candid.

Gwendolen. Well, to speak with perfect candour, Cecily, I wish that you were fully forty-two, and more than usually plain for your age. Ernest has a strong, upright nature. He is the very soul of truth and honor. Disloyalty would be as impossible to him as deception. But even men of the noblest possible moral character are extremely susceptible to the influence of the physical charms of others. Modern, no less than ancient, history, supplies us with many most painful examples of what I refer to. If it were not so, indeed, history would be quite unreadable.

Cecily. I beg your pardon, Gwendolen, did you say Ernest?

Gwen. Yes.

Cecily. Oh, but it is not Mr. Ernest Worthing who is my guardian. It is his brother—his elder brother.

Gwen. Ernest never mentioned to me that he had a brother.

Cecily. I am sorry to say they have not been on good terms for a long time.

Gwen. Ah! That accounts for it. And now that I think of it I have never heard any man mention his brother. The subject seems distasteful to most men. Cecily, you have lifted a load from my mind. I was growing almost anxious. It would have been terrible if any cloud had come across a friendship like ours, would it not? Of course you are quite, quite sure that it is not Mr. Ernest Worthing who is your guardian?

Cecily. Quite sure. [*A pause.*] In fact, I am going to be his.

Gwen. I beg your pardon?

Cecily [*rather shy and confidingly*]. Dearest Gwendolen, there is no reason why I should make a secret of it to you. Our little county newspaper is sure to chronicle the fact next week. Mr. Ernest Worthing and I are engaged to be married.

Gwen. [*quite politely, rising*]. My darling Cecily, I think there must be some slight error. Mr. Ernest Worth-

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ing is engaged to me. The announcement will appear in the *Morning Post* on Saturday morning at the latest.

Cecily [*very politely, rising*]. I am afraid you must be under some misconception. Ernest proposed to me exactly ten minutes ago. [*Shows diary.*]

Gwen. [*examines diary through her lorgnette carefully*]. It is certainly very curious, for he asked me to be his wife yesterday at 5:30. If you would care to verify the incident, pray do so. [*Produces diary of her own.*] I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train. I am so sorry, dear Cecily, if it is any disappointment to you, but I am afraid *I* have the prior claim.

Cecily. It would distress me more than I can tell you, dear Gwendolen, if it caused you any mental or physical anguish, but I feel bound to point out that since Ernest proposed to you he clearly has changed his mind.

Gwen. If the poor fellow has been entrapped into any foolish promise I shall consider it my duty to rescue him at once, and with a firm hand.

Cecily [*thoughtfully and sadly*]. Whatever unfortunate entanglement my dear boy may have got into, I will never reproach him with it after we are married.

Gwen. Do you refer to me, Miss Cardew, as an entanglement? You are presumptuous. On an occasion of this kind it becomes more than a moral duty to speak one's mind. It becomes a pleasure.

Cecily. Do you suggest, Miss Fairfax, that I entrapped Ernest into an engagement? How dare you! This is no time for wearing the shallow mask of manners. When I see a spade I call it a spade.

Gwen. [*satirically*]. I am glad to say that I have never seen a spade. It is obvious that our social spheres are widely different.

The asperity of the controversy is abated by the appearance of Merriman, and then Jack enters. It is at once apparent that Gwendolen's Ernest is not Cecily's Ernest. Algernon comes in also and the fact that neither is named Ernest really is betrayed. With the greatest scorn for both suitors the girls retire into the house.

Jack. This ghastly state of things is what you call Bunburying, I suppose.

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Alger. Yes, and a perfectly wonderful Bunbury it is. The most wonderful Bunbury I have ever had in my life.

Jack. Well, you've no right whatsoever to Bunbury here.

Alger. That is absurd. One has a right to Bunbury anywhere one chooses. Every serious Bunburyist knows that.

Jack. Serious Bunburyist! Good heavens!

Algernon and Jack lose little time about following the girls and explaining that the one pretended to be Ernest in order to have a chance to see Cecily, and the other to see Gwendolen. This is satisfactory so far as it goes, but the insuperable difficulty of their names remains. They declare they are about to be rechristened.

Lady Bracknell arrives, and although she heartily approves of Algernon's engagement to Cecily, who is an heiress, she refuses to sanction the marriage of Gwendolen to a person whose origin was a terminus. In that case, Jack says, he will not consent to the marriage of his ward to Algernon. Doctor Chasuble comes in to say that everything is ready for the christenings.

Lady B. The christenings, sir! Is not that somewhat premature?

Chas. Both these gentlemen have expressed a desire for immediate baptism.

Lady B. At their age? The idea is grotesque and irreligious! Algernon, I forbid you to be baptized. I will not hear of such excesses. Lord Bracknell would be highly displeased if he heard that that was the way in which you wasted your time and money.

Doctor Chasuble says he must return to the church, where, he has been informed, Miss Prism has been waiting for him for an hour and a half.

Lady B. Miss Prism! Pray allow me to detain you for a moment. This matter may prove to be one of vital importance to Lord Bracknell and myself. Is this Miss Prism a female of repellent aspect, remotely connected with education?

Chas. [*somewhat indignantly*]. She is the most cultivated of ladies, and the very picture of respectability.

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Lady B. It is obviously the same person. May I ask what position she holds in your household?

Chas. [*severely*]. I am a celibate, Madam.

Jack. Miss Prism, Lady Bracknell has been for the last three years Miss Cardew's esteemed governess and valued companion.

MISS PRISM *enters hurriedly.*

Miss P. I was told you expected me in the vestry, dear Canon. I have been waiting for you there for an hour and three quarters. [*Catches sight of* LADY BRACKNELL, *who has fixed her with a stony glare.* MISS PRISM *grows pale and quails. She looks anxiously round as if desirous to escape.*]

Lady B. [*in a severe, judicial voice*]. Prism! [MISS PRISM *bows her head in shame.*] Come here, Prism! [MISS PRISM *approaches in a humble manner.*] Prism! Where is that baby? [*General consternation. The canon starts back in horror.* ALGERNON *and* JACK *pretend to be anxious to shield* CECILY *and* GWENDOLEN *from hearing the details of a terrible public scandal.*] Twenty-eight years ago, Prism, you left Lord Bracknell's house, Number 104 Upper Grosvenor Street, in charge of a perambulator that contained a baby of the male sex. You never returned. A few weeks later, through the elaborate investigations of the Metropolitan police, the perambulator was discovered at midnight, standing by itself in a remote corner of Bayswater. It contained the manuscript of a three-volume novel of more than usually revolting sentimentality. But the baby was not there. Prism, where is that baby? [*A pause.*]

Miss P. Lady Bracknell, I admit with shame that I do not know. I only wish I did. The plain facts of the case are these: on the morning of the day you mention, a day that is for ever branded on my memory, I prepared as usual to take the baby out in its perambulator. I had also with me an old but capacious hand bag in which I had intended to place the manuscript of a work of fiction that I had written during my few unoccupied hours. In a moment of mental abstraction, for which I never can forgive myself, I deposited the manuscript in the bassinette, and placed the baby in the hand bag.

Jack. But where did you deposit the hand bag?

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Miss P. Do not ask me, Mr. Worthing.

Jack. Miss Prism, this is a matter of no small importance to me. I insist on knowing where you deposited the hand bag that contained that infant.

Miss P. I left it in the cloak-room of one of the larger railway stations in London.

Jack. What railway station?

Miss P. [*quite crushed*]. Victoria. The Brighton line. [*Sinks into a chair.*]

Jack rushes out and returns in a moment with the hand bag.

Jack. Miss Prism, more is restored to you than this hand bag. I was the baby you placed in it.

Miss P. You!

Jack [*embracing her*]. Yes . . . mother!

Miss P. [*recoiling in indignant astonishment*]. Mr. Worthing! I am unmarried!

Jack. Unmarried! I do not deny that is a serious blow. But after all, who has a right to cast a stone against one who has suffered? Cannot repentance wipe out an act of folly? Why should there be one law for men and another for women? Mother, I forgive you.

Miss P. [*still more indignant*]. Mr. Worthing, there is some error. There is the lady who can tell you who you really are.

Jack. Lady Bracknell, I hate to seem inquisitive, but will you kindly inform me who I am?

Lady B. I am afraid that the news I have to give you will not altogether please you. You are the son of my poor sister, Mrs. Mencrieff, and consequently Algernon's elder brother.

Lady Bracknell recalls that Algernon's elder brother was named Ernest.

Gwen. Ernest! My own Ernest! I felt from the first that you could have no other name!

Jack. I've now realized for the first time in my life the vital importance of being Ernest.

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MICHAEL AND HIS LOST ANGEL*

By Henry Arthur Jones

First played in London at the Lyceum Theatre on January 15, 1896.

Argument: The Reverend Michael Feversham, an ascetic Anglican clergyman, who has taken the vow of celibacy, struggles vainly against the wilful fascination of Mrs. Audrie Lesden, a visitor in his parish whom he considers very worldly and frivolous. Retiring to a lonely island to fortify himself by meditation and prayer, he is followed by Mrs. Lesden, but persuades her to dash the cup of earthly love from their lips, only to find that there is no means of escape from the island that night. Thereafter he must choose between surrender to their all-consuming passion and the crushing agony of renunciation.

The vicarage parlour at Cleveheddon is an old-fashioned, comfortable room in an old English house. A large window, with low broad sill, taking up nearly all of the back of the room, shows a stretch of West Country landscape, and at one side a part of Cleveheddon Minster in ruins. Andrew Gibbon, who assists the Reverend Michael Feversham in scholarly researches, stands looking out of the window as he talks to the Reverend Mark Docwray, a middle-aged clergyman.

Signs of great recent sorrow are evident in Andrew's face. He is telling Mr. Docwray that his daughter Rose was betrayed by a scoundrel and had a child that died in a few weeks. He did his best to hide the affair, but at last it all had to come out. Mr. Feversham persuaded them that they could never be right with themselves, or with their neighbors, or with their God, till they

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had unsaid all their lies. They have just made a public confession in church. Andrew thinks it was too hard a thing to ask his girl to do, and says he no longer feels as if he were in Mr. Feversham's debt.

Rose, a pretty delicate girl of twenty, with rather refined features and bearing, comes in sobbing, supported by an Anglican sister. Andrew holds out his arms to her. Mr. Feversham enters directly after her. He is about forty, with a pale, strong, calm, ascetic, scholarly face, with much sweetness and spirituality of expression. His whole bearing denotes great strength of character, great dignity, and great self-control.

There is a short scene of farewell. Mr. Feversham speaks tenderly to Rose, telling her of the peace that is coming to her in the convent. After a last paroxysm of grief, she tears herself from her father's arms. When she has gone Michael tells Andrew that he has done as he would wish to be done by if he had followed a course of continued deception. It is with reluctance and half-heartedly that Andrew shakes hands.

The restoration of the Minster is Michael's most cherished project. He has just received an anonymous contribution of fifty pounds, which he suspects was given by a Mrs. Audrie Lesden, a very wealthy woman who has come recently to Cleveheddon. Michael tells Mr. Docwray that she has called three or four times and wasted several good hours for him. He rather dislikes her on account of what he takes to be her frivolity and insincerity, and wishes she would go back to London.

Sir Lyolf Feversham, Michael's father, comes in, and the conversation about Mrs. Lesden is continued.

Sir Lyolf. When you don't understand a woman, depend upon it there's something not quite right about her.

Michael. She seems to have immense possibilities of good and evil.

Sir L. Nonsense. There are all sorts of men, but, believe me, there are only two sorts of women—good and bad.

Mich. [*shaking his head*]. Women's characters have greater subtlety than you suppose.

Sir L. Subtlety is the big cant word of our age. Depend upon it, there's nothing in subtlety. It either means

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hair-splitting or it means downright evil. The devil was the first subtle character we meet with in history.

Mich. And he has still something to do with the shaping of character in this world.

Sir L. I don't doubt it. And I think he has very likely something to do with the shaping of Mrs. Lesden's.

Mich. Hasn't he something to do with the shaping of all of our characters? Don't all our souls swing continually between heaven and hell?

Sir L. Well, the woman whose soul swings continually between heaven and hell is not the woman I would choose to sit at my fireside or take the head of my table. Though I don't say I wouldn't ask her to dinner occasionally.

He thinks he will ask Mrs Lesden to a dinner at his house to which he has already invited several other guests, including Michael. Michael rather protests, but his father points out that if Mrs. Lesden's soul is swinging between heaven and hell Michael may be able to give it a jog toward heaven.

After Sir Lyolf and Mr. Docwray have left, Mrs. Lesden looks in at the low window. Michael is very reserved at first in talking to her.

Audrie. I think I'm in need of spiritual advice. [*A pause. He stands cold, irresponsive.*] Did you see me in church?

Mich. Yes.

Aud. The whole thing was delightfully novel. [*He frowns.*] Do you mean to repeat this morning's scene?

Mich. Scene?

Aud. It was a "scene" you know. I felt terribly distressed for the poor girl. And yet I envied her.

Mich. Envied her?

Aud. [*leaning a little more in at the window*]. You must allow me she was the heroine of the occasion, though you were certainly very impressive yourself, and did your part very well. Still, after all, it's the man who is to be hanged who is the central figure in the proceedings. And the poor little creature looked exquisitely pathetic and graceful, and so sweetly innocent—quite good enough to go to heaven right away, I thought. A Sunday-school teacher told me once that it is nearly always the good girls who are betrayed. Is that so?

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Mich. [*coldly*]. You came to speak to me about yourself.

Aud. So I did. Do you know when I saw that girl standing there and looking so interesting, I felt I wouldn't mind making a public confession myself—if you thought it would benefit the parish—and if you would allow me to wear a special dress for the occasion?

Michael turns round quickly as if about to speak angrily to her, stops and remains silent. She leans farther in at the window, and in a lower and subtler tone asks if he does not find it an exquisite pleasure to feel his sense of power over his people, especially over the poor women. He replies that they are neither men nor women when they come to him, only souls in sin and distress. She rebels stoutly at the idea of being an "it." She insists upon being a woman, although she doesn't mind about having a soul, or even about being in sin and distress.

The three different professions of soldier, doctor, and priest have their own delights, she thinks. The soldier kills the man who rides to meet him, the doctor plays with life and death, and the priest has the far greater joy of playing with people's souls. He turns toward her angrily, but she placates him by making him think she has come to be saved. Finding that she is not sincere, he tells her to go back to the world until he can be of real service to her.

Before going she warns him not to let her play with his soul. He may influence her for good, but she is far more likely to do him harm, the law of action and reaction prevailing in the spiritual world as well as in the material world. She begs leave to kiss a portrait of his mother. He would rather she didn't, but she persists perversely and then says that his bad angel has kissed his good angel. She makes him a mock curtsey and goes out.

Four months have passed. Michael, in great distress of mind, has retired to Saint Decuman's Island in the Bristol Channel to spend a few days in meditation and prayer. On the island, which is uninhabited, he has built a small cabin around the shrine of the saint, a fine piece of gothic, which is in the back of the living-room.

Michael's uncle, Edward Lashmar, a Catholic priest whose home is in Italy, is in England, and Michael has asked him to visit him at the island. Father Hilary, as

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his uncle is called, comes in response to the request, but Michael changes his mind and does not confide in him. Father Hilary tells him that if he ever needs a deeper peace than he can find within himself or around him to come to him in Italy.

Left by himself, Michael takes a letter from his pocket. It is from Audrie. He has read it and reread it, but it requires a great effort for him not to read it again. He speaks aloud, asking why she came into his life unbidden, and before he was aware of it unlocked the holiest places of his heart. He declares he will not yield to her, yet he sees her in the fire, all about him.

Michael struggles to master himself, crying out he will be servant to none save his work and his God. He ends by reading the letter again. She has written that he is the one man living who can give her the impulse to make a saint of herself, but that it would be at too great cost to himself. He burns the letter and says he has torn out the last dear thought of her, has conquered, and shall be at peace. He seats himself resolutely at the table to read.

There is a little tap at the door. He shows surprise. The tap is repeated. He rises, goes to the door and opens it. At the same moment Audrie's face appears at the window for a moment. He stands looking out a minute or two, and then closes the door, seats himself again at the table, and resumes his reading. The tap is repeated. He rises; Audrie appears at the door. For a moment he shows intense delight which he quickly subdues.

The sun is setting as they begin their tête-à-tête, which is destined to be a long one, although she believes it will be only a few minutes before a boat will come for her. She had an impulse to visit the island and came on an excursion steamer which made only a short stop and has already left. She admits that she gave numerous contributions for the restoration of the Minster which he has received. He is glad to owe it all to her.

Aud. Do you believe the legend about Saint Decuman and Saint Margaret?

Mich. That they loved each other?

Aud. Yes, on separate islands, and never met.

Mich. They denied themselves love here that they might gain heavenly happiness hereafter.

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Aud. Now that their hearts have been dust all these hundreds of years, what good is it to them that they denied themselves love?

Mich. You think——

Aud. I think a little love on this earth is worth a good many paradises hereafter. It's a cold world, hereafter. It chills me to the bone when I think of it!

She shivers a little and takes a seat by the fire. They talk for the first time of their past lives. He had been in love once before he met Audrie and had touched the girl's cheek with his lips the last time he saw her. "She called you Mike?" says Audrie with some surprise and more bitterness. She says she would show him all her heart, all her thoughts, all her life, if she could do it as one shows a picture, and let it speak for itself.

Aud. What a world there is within one's self that one never dares speak of! I wish to hide nothing from you. I would have you know me through and through for just the woman that I am, just that and no other, because, don't you see—I don't want to cheat you of a farthing's worth of esteem on false pretences—I want you to like me, Audrie Lesden, and not some myth of your imagination. But if you were armed with all the tortures of hell for plucking the truth about myself from my lips, I should still hide myself from you. So, guess, guess, guess, grand inquisitor—what is here—[*tapping her forehead*]—and here! [*Putting her hand on her heart.*] You'll never guess one thousandth part of the truth!

She does tell him that she married as thousands of girls do, carelessly, thoughtlessly. She was married for her money. No one had ever told her that love was sacred. After two years her husband left her. Michael infers that he is dead. But she has another secret, one about him, which he demands to know.

Aud. I have sold you to the devil.

Mich. What?

Aud. I have sold myself, too.

Mich. Still jesting?

Aud. No, I did it in real, deep earnest.

Mich. I don't understand you.

Aud. Six months ago I was tired, gnawn to the very heart with ennui, and one hot restless night I happened to

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take up your book, "The Hidden Life." It came to me—oh, like a breath of the purest, freshest air in a fevered room. I thought I should like to know you. I got up early, took the first morning train down here, looked about the place, saw the Island House was to let, and rented it for three years.

Mich. Well?

Aud. I got Mr. Docwray to give me an introduction to you. You annoyed me, you were so cold and priestlike. Each time I saw you, you piqued and angered me more and more. I longed to get some power over you. At last one day after you had been so frozen and distant a little black imp jumped into my brain and whispered to me. I said to the devil, "Give this sculptured saint to me and I will give both our souls to you."

Audrie declares she meant it with all her heart, and that she bit her arm till the teeth met. She shows him the mark. If there is a devil, she says, he heard her. She is not strong enough to leave him of her own free will, she tells him; he must beat her away from him, insult her, and make her hate him.

Mich. When I love you with all my being?

Aud. [*with great delight*]. And you dare go on? It's an awful delight to think that a man would dare to risk hell for one! There aren't many men who would dare lose this world for the woman they love—how many men are there that would dare to lose the other?

Mich. We must lose this world, for I am vowed away from all earthly things. But why should we lose the other? Why should we not make our love the lever to raise our souls? You love me?

The word doesn't express the adoration she feels for him. She says he has changed her thoroughly from her worthless, silly, capricious, hollow, worldly, and bad self. His answer is that he will be proud of her when she dares to leave him of her own free will, because she loves him, for he is vowed to heaven. He may not taste of earthly love, but it is cruel to dash the cup from his lips.

Aud. Good-bye, my love, for ever. Be brave—and very cold to me now. Be like marble—and death.

Mich. [*takes her hand; a very long pause; then speaks very calmly*]. It is victory, isn't it? We have con-

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quered? I'll go down to the bay and see if your boat has come.

By this time it is dark outside. He is about to start when he learns that the boatman she sent a telegram to is the one who took Father Hilary away. The boatman did not receive the message, and there is no way for her to leave the island.

Two nights and a day later when Michael enters the vicarage parlor it is with the troubled and self-absorbed expression of a man trying to realize that he has committed a great and irrevocable sin. Andrew comes in to consult him about an Arabic text and notices that his hands are blistered. Michael explains that he has done a little rowing. He asks if Andrew heard him go out in the night. Andrew hesitates, and then says he did not.

Audrie comes presently, anxious to know if all is "safe." Michael says that the matter will never be heard of again except in their two hearts, and in the High Court where such cases are tried. She tells him not to preach and not to regret. He now thinks he was cruelly hard on Andrew's little girl. When it comes to himself he hides and cloaks and equivocates. He traces out all the little chances and accidents that brought them together. She says they couldn't have missed each other in this world. Now it is left for them to repent, he says, to confess and do penance, and then if and when it shall be permitted to them to marry.

The word marriage startles Audrie. She knows her husband is living.

Alone with Andrew again, Michael tells him that he has been thinking perhaps he was wrong in urging Rose to confess. Andrew says he cherishes no ill-feeling on that account, and assures Michael he may trust him entirely. He warns Michael furthermore not to betray himself. He says Michael is a worse bungler than he was. He heard Michael go out in the middle of the night and followed him down to the beach, saw him start off in a boat and row back with Mrs. Lesden.

Mich. [*breaking down*]. I was harsh and cruel to Rose. I punished her more than she deserved. I was a hard, self-righteous priest! I hadn't been tempted myself then.

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Send for her to come home again! Comfort her and give her the best place in your heart. Write at once. Let her come back to-morrow! Oh, what weak, wretched Pharisees we are! What masks of holiness we wear! What whited sepulchres we are! Send for her! Make up to her for all she has suffered! Let me ask her pardon! Oh, Andrew, have pity on me! Forgive me, forgive me!

Michael bends his head in tears. Andrew steals out of the room. Audrie appears at the window and taps. He lets her in. She is in great distress. She has to tell him that her husband is living, for he has come back. She says she will get rid of him and never see him again.

Aud. Ah, now I know you love me! If you only dare be as bold as I dare——

Mich. Bold?

Aud. We love each other. Our loves and lives are in our own hands.

Mich. [*repulses her, braces himself in stern resolve, very coldly and commandingly*]. Listen! These are perhaps the last words I shall ever speak to you. The past is the past. There's no way out of that. But the future is in our power. Can't you see, woman, that we are halfway down the precipice? We'll go no farther. From this moment we part; I toil back to repentance and peace one way, you toil back another. So far as God will give me grace I'll never think of you from this moment—I'll spend my life in putting a gulf between you and me. You do the same—ask only one thing for yourself and me, that we may forget each other.

Aud. [*looks at him, smiles, sighs, then as she is going*]. I was right about man's love. You are all cowards. There's not one of you that doesn't think first of his comfort, or his pocket, or his honor, or his skin, or his soul, and second of the woman he thinks he loves. Forget you? [*A little laugh.*] Do you think that possible? Do you think I was jesting with you when I gave myself to you? Forget you? [*A little laugh.*] My memory is good for such trifles. Forget you?

A wild revulsion carries Michael away for a moment. He will follow her anywhere. Then he swings toward heaven again. He tells her to go back to her duty and deep repentance; to have the courage to tread the hard road.

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She asks if he is sure they shall meet one day hereafter. He believes it. He opens the door. She passes out, and then returns.

Aud. Listen to this. Whatever happens, I shall never belong to anybody but you. You understand? [MICHAEL *bows his head.*] I shall never belong to anybody but you, Mike.

Michael watches her out of sight from the window. Andrew comes back to ask if he will begin his work that morning. When they have talked a few minutes Michael exclaims:

Mich. What ought I to do, Andrew?

Andrew. Don't you know what you ought to do?

Mich. What?

And. Mete out to yourself the same measure you meted to others.

Mich. Confess—in public. I can't! I can't! I daren't! I'm a coward, a weak, miserable coward! Don't judge me harshly, Andrew! Don't be hard on me! [*Covering his face with his hands.*]

And. [*cold, firm*]. Come, sir! Shall we get on with our work? [*Reading manuscript.*] "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me."

Michael uncovers his face and sits staring at Andrew, who sits cold and grim on the other side of the table.

A year later the work of restoring the Minster church of Saint Decuman at Cleveheddon has been completed and dedication services are about to be held. The church is decorated with banners and hangings and is smothered with flowers. It is about nine o'clock on an autumn night. An organ voluntary is being played as Michael enters from the transept. He has aged very much and is very pale and emaciated.

Andrew brings word that Mrs. Lesden has come back to Cleveheddon. Michael remonstrates that Andrew has made it constant business to reproach him. Andrew asks why, when he was so hard on his girl, he does not do what is best for his own soul. To Andrew's surprise, Michael replies that that is what he is about to do. He has sent for Rose to be present at the ceremony the next day.

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Michael confides his intention also to his father and Mr. Docwray, who vainly endeavor to dissuade him. Mr. Docwray has heard that Mrs. Lesden's life in London has been one continual round of gaiety and excitement, except when she was ill.

Rose comes to the church a little later. She is in the dress of an Anglican sister, and is very pale and subdued. She has nothing to forgive Mr. Feversham, she says, for he was right, and now she has gained happiness or rather peace, which is better than happiness. Michael tells her and her father that he will see that they are sufficiently provided for.

Michael is alone when he hears a woman's laugh in the transept. He withdraws to one side of the chancel where he cannot be seen by Audrie when she comes forward with her friend, Mrs. Cantelo. She is in magnificent evening dress and carries a large basket of roses. Her features are much paler and sharpened, and she shows a constant restlessness and excitement.

Aud. [*looks around, calls out*]. Somebody is here? [*Pause, calls out.*] Somebody is here? No? . . . There's nobody here except—[*raising her voice*]—a stone saint—[*pointing up to carved figure*]—and he can't hear me because he has only stone ears, and he can't feel because he has only a stone heart. [MICHAEL *shows intense feeling.*]

Audrie tells her friend that she wishes to decorate the church to show her deep, deep love, her deep, deep worship, her deep, deep remembrance. Mrs. Cantelo thinks that Mr. Feversham must have some very devoted friends for them to have given so much money for the church, and asks what sort of a man he is. Audrie says he is very cold and distant, much like the figure of the stone saint, and that he probably has forgotten all about her. She bursts into tears.

Aud. I am not well to-night. I oughtn't to have come here. Milly—I never forget anybody. If I had once loved you I should love you forever. If you were wicked, or unfortunate, or unfaithful, it would make no difference to me. Kiss me, Milly—say you believe me.

Milly. You know I do, darling.

Aud. [*very passionately*]. I can be constant, Milly—

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I can! Constant in my friendship, constant in my love! Oh, Milly, I'm the most wretched woman in the world!

Mil. You're hysterical, dear.

Aud. No, I'm forsaken. Nobody loves me! [*Sobbing, gesture from* MICHAEL.]

Mil. Poor Audrie!

Aud. Let me be a few minutes by myself. I want to be quite alone. Go home and wait for me there.

Mil. I don't like leaving you.

Audrie says she will be better soon if left alone, and Milly goes. Michael comes forward. Audrie goes toward him and they stand for a moment or two looking at each other. Then he asks her why she has come. He says coldly that she is not unwelcome in response to her question; the church owes much to her. She thinks it does, for it has robbed her of his love. She reproaches him for having sent back all her letters unopened. It has cost him much to do so, but he has been trying to repent and to forget.

Mich. You've been ill.

Aud. Oh, my dear spiritual doctor, you don't know how ill I've been. I get up every morning without hope, I drag through the day without hope, I go to this thing and that, to this party, to that reception, to the theatre, to church, to a pigeon-shooting match, to the park, to Ascot, to Henley—here, there, everywhere, all without hope.

Mich. What is it you want?

Aud. I want to live again! I've never lived but those few months when we were learning to love each other!

He declares that he has forgotten everything connected with their comradeship, all the little incidents that she reminds him of tenderly.

Mich. [*apart from her*]. Oh, my God, if I could forget! [*A long pause. He comes to her.*] I have one awful thought —I am bound to you—there is but one of us—I never felt it more than at this moment—and yet the awful thought comes to me—if by any decree we should be put asunder hereafter—if we should be parted then!

Aud. Don't you dread being parted now—this moment? Don't you dread being unhappy here—here on this earth?

Mich. I will not think of that. I have vowed!

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Aud. You don't love me! You don't love me! You don't love me!

Mich. If I had ten thousand worlds I'd sell them all and buy your soul. But I will keep the vow I have vowed. You are the holiest thing on earth to me. I will keep you white and stainless from me.

Aud. You'll never forget me.

Mich. I have forgotten you.

Aud. You'll never forget me.

Mich. [*same cold tone, going up the altar steps*]. I have forgotten you. [*Stands with his back to her for a few moments.*]

He does not even wish to decorate the church, and asks her not to be present at the dedication service the next day. Shall she see him afterward, she inquires. The next day, he informs her, he is going away from Cleveheddon forever, whither he will not say.

Aud. It doesn't matter, I shall find you out.

Mich. You'll follow me?

Aud. Yes—all over this world, and ten thousand others. I shall follow you. You'll find me always with you, clawing at your heart. Au revoir. [*Takes up her basket of roses, going out with them, stops.*] Do let me put some flowers on the altar—just to remind you. Your memory is so bad, you know.

He raises his hand very quietly and turns his back on her. She stands very quiet and hopeless for a few seconds, then takes up the basket of flowers, goes a step or two toward the transept, turns.

Aud. I'm going to be very ill after this. [*He stands at the altar in an attitude of prayer, his back to her.*] Do you hear, I'm going to be very ill? There's a little string in my heart—I've just heard it snap. [*Pause.*] If I were dying and I sent for you, would you come?

Mich. [*after a long pause, very quietly*]. Yes. [*Pause.*]

Aud. And that's all? And that's all? [*He stands unmoved at the altar, his back to her. She takes a large red rose out of the basket, throws it toward him; it falls on the white marble altar steps.*] There's a flower for to-morrow! Do put it on the altar for me! You won't? You won't? [*No answer.*] It is hard to be turned out of my own church—it is hard——

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She goes out by the transept with the basket of flowers. A sob is heard. Michael turns round. A door is heard to close. He puts out the altar lights and throws himself on the altar steps.

The following morning Andrew and Rose occupy conspicuous places among the worshippers. Audrie's flower is lying on the altar steps. A processional hymn is being sung, a procession of surpliced priests file up the aisle and take their places in the chancel, walking over Audrie's rose. Michael follows at the end of the procession; as he reaches the altar steps he turns, very pale and cold, and speaks in a low, calm voice.

He has a duty to perform to his people, he says; he has often insisted on the necessity of a life of perfect openness before God and man; he stands there to own to them that while he has been vainly preaching to them his own life has been pollute with deceit and with deadly sin; he can find no repentance and no peace till he has freely acknowledged that he is not worthy to continue his sacred office; he has sinned as—David sinned; he has broken the sanctity of the marriage vow.

Mich. It is my just sentence to go forth from you, not as your guide, your leader, your priest; but as a broken sinner, humbled in the dust before the Heaven he has offended. I bid you all farewell. I ask your pardon for having dared to continue in my office knowing I had profaned and desecrated it. It now remains for me to seek the pardon of Heaven. Let the service continue without me. Let no one leave this place. Pray for me, all of you. I have need of your prayers! Pray for me!

He descends the altar steps amidst the hushed and respectful surprise of the congregation. Rose makes a very slight gesture of sympathy as he passes her. Andrew stands with his hands over his eyes. Michael passes out by the transept, his head bowed, his lips moving in prayer.

In search of peace, Michael comes to the Monastery of San Salvatore in Majano, Italy. It is ten months since the dedication of his Minster church. Audrie, wasted with fever and believing she has not long to live, has traced him and come at last to the village, but Father Hilary has kept back her messages from Michael, telling

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her that Michael is away on a journey, which is true, although he is within easy call. Sir Lyolf, much concerned for the welfare of his son, is also in Majano, and protests with Father Hilary against his course of action.

It is a summer evening, and Sir Lyolf comes to report to the priest that Audrie is in a very strange state, laughing, crying, jesting, fainting, and chattering like a magpie. He has heard she has been very ill, and believes she is dying. Father Hilary says it is better that she should pass away without Michael's knowledge, now that he is at last learning to forget her, after all he has suffered these many months. Sir Lyolf cannot reconcile himself to this view. Audrie has dragged herself all the way from England with the one hope of seeing Michael. He feels that he is helping to crush the life out of her.

While they are talking Michael enters. He is very listless and has an expression of settled pensiveness and resignation, almost despair. He shakes hands affectionately with his father and Father Hilary and sits down without speaking. As Sir Lyolf seeks anxiously to learn if Michael is really gaining peace, Father Hilary insists that he will be soon, and tries to silence Sir Lyolf and lead Michael away. In spite of Father Hilary's assertions, it is plain that Michael's indomitable strength is broken at last.

Sir L. Michael, before you take this last step answer me one question—I have a reason for asking. Tell me this truly. If by any chance some one in England—some one who was dear to you——

Mich. Oh, don't speak of her—— [*Turns away, hides his head for a minute, turns round with a sudden outburst.*] Yes, speak of her! Speak of her! I haven't heard her name for so long! Let me hear it again—Audrie! Audrie!

Father H. [*sternly to* Sir Lyolf]. Do you hear? Let him alone! Don't torment him by dragging up the past. He has buried it.

Mich. No! No! No! Why should I deceive you? Why should I deceive myself? All this pretended peace is no peace! There is no peace for me without her, either in this world or the next.

Father H. Hush! Hush! How dare you speak so!

Mich. I must. The live agony of speech is better

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than the dead agony of silence, the eternal days and nights without her! Forget her? I can't forget! Look!

He takes out a faded red rose. It is the one she flung at him the last time he saw her, the rose he would not take. He tells them he sent her away and the flower was trampled on. The next night he got up in the middle of the night and went over to the church and found it on the altar steps. He has kept it ever since. He begs his father to talk to him about her, to tell him something he remembers of her, some little speech of hers. He says he is not there in that place with them: he is living with her two years ago; he has no present, no future, only the past when she was with him.

Mich. Give me the past! Oh! give me back only one moment of that past, one look, one word from her—and then take all that remains of me and do what you like with it. Oh!

He goes back to the bench and sits down, and his father and uncle pursue their disputation.

Audrie's face, wasted and hectic, appears just over the doorstep, coming up the steps at the back. She raises herself very slowly and with great difficulty, leaning on the wall.

Mich. I've heard nothing of her. Where do you think she is? In England? I think I could be patient, I think I could bear my life if I knew for certain that all was well with her. If I could know that she is happy—— No, she isn't happy—I know that.

Sir. L. Michael, I've had some news of her.

Mich. News! Good? Bad? Quick! Tell me.

Sir. L. You can bear it?

Mich. She's dead? And I never went to her! I never went to her! She won't forgive me.

Sir L. She's not dead.

Mich. What then?

Sir L. You promised you'd go to her if she sent for you.

Mich. Yes.

Sir L. She has sent for you. [*Sees her entering.*]

Mich. She's dying?

[*She has gained the door, just enters, leaning back against the post.* MICHAEL'S *back is toward her.*]

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Aud. I'm afraid I am. . . .

[MICHAEL *looks at her, utters a wild cry of joy, then looks at her more closely, realizes she is dying, goes to her, kisses her, bursts into sobs.*]

Aud. [*putting her hand on his head*]. Don't cry. I'm past crying for. Help me there. [*Points to seat.*]

[*He seats her; looks at her with great anxiety.*]

Aud. [*laughing, a little weak feeble laugh, and speaking feebly with pause between each word*]. Don't pull—that—long—face. You'll—make me—laugh—if you—do. And I want to be—serious now.

Mich. But you're dying!

Aud. [*with a sigh*]. Yes. Can't help it. Sir Lyolf, pay—coachman—[*taking out purse feebly*]—outside—no, perhaps—better—wait—or bring another sort—of—carriage. But no mutes—no feathers—no mummery.

Sir L. I'll send him away. You'll stay with us now?

Aud. [*nods*]. So sorry—to intrude. Won't be very long about it.

[*Exit* SIR LYOLF *by door and steps;* MICHAEL *is standing with hands over eyes.*]

Father H. [*coming to* AUDRIE]. Can I be of any service, any comfort to you?

Aud. No, thanks. I've been dreadfully wicked—doesn't much—matter, eh? Can't help it now. Haven't strength to feel sorry. So sorry I can't feel sorry.

Father H. There is forgiveness——

Aud. Yes, I know. Not now. Want to be with him. [*Indicating* MICHAEL.]

SIR LYOLF *reënters by steps.*

Sir L. Come, Ned——

Aud. [*to* FATHER HILARY]. Come back again—in—few minutes. I shall want you. I've been dreadfully wicked. But I've built a church—and—[*feverishly*]—I've loved him—with all my heart—and a little bit over.

[*Exeunt* SIR LYOLF *and* FATHER HILARY *door left.*

Aud. [*motioning* MICHAEL]. Why didn't you come when I sent for you?

Mich. I've only known this moment. Why didn't you send before?

Aud. I sent you hundreds—of messages—from my heart of hearts. Didn't you get them?

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Mich. Yes—every one.

Aud. I've crawled all over Europe after you. And you aren't worth it—yes, you are. You wouldn't come——

Mich. Yes—anywhere—anywhere—take me where you will.

Aud. You know—he's dead. I'm free.

Mich. Is it so? But it's too late.

Aud. Yes. Pity! Not quite a well-arranged world, is it? Hold my hand. We're not to be parted?

Mich. No.

Aud. Sure?

Mich. Quite sure. You're suffering?

Aud. No—that's past. [*Shuts her eyes. He watches her.*] Very comfortable—very happy—just like going into a delicious faint. [*Sighs*]. Do you remember—beautiful sunrise—diamonds on the sea——

Mich. Yes, I remember—all—every moment! And the wind that blew us together when we stood on the cliff! Oh! we were happy then—I remember all! All! All!

Aud. So glad your memory's good at last. [*A vesper hymn heard off at some distance.*] Pity to die on such a lovely evening—not quite well-arranged world? But we were happy—if the next world has anything as good it won't be much amiss. I'm going. Fetch—priest—— [MICHAEL *is going to door left; she calls him back.*] No. No time to waste. Don't leave me. We shan't be parted?

Mich. No! No! No! No!

Aud. [*gives a deep sigh of content, then looks up at his mother's picture*]. She's there? [MICHAEL *nods.*] She'll forgive me! [*Blows a little kiss to the picture.*] But I'm your angel—I'm leading you——

Mich. Yes. Where?

Aud. I don't know. Don't fuss about it. "Le bon Dieu nous pardonnera: c'est son métier——" [*Closes her eyes.*] Not parted? [*Looks up at him.*]

Mich. No! No! No! No!

Aud. You won't keep me waiting too long? [*Looks up at him, a long deep sigh of content.*] Hold my hand—tight! Tight! Oh! don't look so solemn——

[*Begins to laugh, a ripple of bright, feeble laughter,*

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growing louder and stronger, a little outburst, then a sudden stop, as she drops dead. MICHAEL *kisses her lips, her face, her hands, her dress.*]

Enter FATHER HILARY.

Mich. Take me! I give my life, my will, my soul, to you! Do what you please with me! I'll believe all, do all, suffer all—only—only persuade me that I shall meet her again! [*Throws himself on her body.*]

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THE LIARS*

By Henry Arthur Jones

First played in London at the Criterion Theatre on October 6, 1897.

Argument: Lady Jessica Nepean is carrying on a desperate flirtation with Edward Falkner, a soldier who has won fame in Africa, and is quite indifferent to her husband's furious jealousy. Their acquaintances become entangled in a conspiracy to keep her husband from learning that she made an appointment to take dinner with Falkner. The problem is whether Nepean will learn the truth and circumvent Falkner.

In a very excited manner, his voice more than ordinarily squeaky, Freddie Tatton is telling Archibald Coke that it's all very well for people to say, "Give a woman her head; don't ride her on the curb." But when a fellow has a wife like his, or like Jessica Nepean, it's confoundedly difficult to get her to go at all without a spill. Coke agrees that it is perplexing to know precisely how to handle a wife—he drinks and sighs—very perplexing.

They are sitting in a large tent on the lawn of Freddie Tatton's house in the Thames valley. Through an opening in the back is seen a secluded part of the river. The tent is of Eastern material, splendidly embroidered in rich colors. The floor is planked and some rugs are laid down. The place is comfortably furnished for a summer tea and smoking room. It is after dinner on a summer evening.

Coke is a tall, pompous, precise man, about fifty. Freddie, a weedy, nervous little creature, about thirty, is walking about.

Freddie. Perplexing? It's a d—ee—d silly riddle without any answer! You know I didn't want to have

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this house-party for the Regatta—[COKE *looks at him*] —I beg your pardon. Of course I wanted to have you and Dolly, and I didn't mind Gilbert and Jess. But I didn't want to have Falkner here. He's paying a great deal too much attention to Jess, and Jess doesn't choke him off as she should. Well, I thoroughly made up my mind if Jess came, Falkner shouldn't.

Coke. Yes?

Fred. Well, Rosamund said he should. So I stuck out, and she stuck out, in fact, we both stuck out for a week. I was determined he shouldn't come.

The upshot was that Rosamund invited him, and Freddie has to be civil to him. Freddie thinks that a wife like Coke's, who may be terribly thoughtless and frivolous, is to be preferred, for she lets a man call his soul his own. That's all he wants, and he declares that he will one of these days.

Mrs. Crespin brings tidings that Lady Jessica and Mr. Falkner have gone for a little moonlight row. At this moment Colonel Sir Christopher Deering enters the tent. He is a genial, handsome Englishman about thirty-eight. George Nepean, a dark, rather heavy-looking man about the same age, follows him. George wants Sir Christopher to say a word to Falkner, but Sir Christopher hushes him up.

Sir Christopher. Nothing, Freddie, nothing! Our friend here—[*trying to link his arm in* GEORGE'S; GEORGE *stands off*]—is a little old-fashioned. He doesn't understand that in all really innocent flirtations ladies allow themselves a very large latitude indeed. In fact, from my very modest experience with the sex—take it for what it's worth—I should say the more innocent the flirtation, the larger the latitude the lady allows herself, eh, Mrs. Crespin?

Mrs. Crespin. Oh, we are all latitudinarians at heart.

Sir C. Yes; but a lady who practises extensively as a latitudinarian rarely becomes a—a—a longitudinarian, eh?

Mrs. C. Oh, I wouldn't answer for her! It's a horrid, wicked world; and if once a woman allows one of you wretches to teach her the moral geography of it, it's ten to one she gets her latitude and longitude mixed before she has had time at the map.

Lady Rosamund and Dolly Coke come in. Coke pro-

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tests in a querulous pedantic way because Dolly has no wrap about her shoulders. Dolly replies that other people don't wrap up: Jessica is out on the river with absolutely nothing on her shoulders. Mrs. Crespin remarks that it is a physiological fact that when one's heart reaches a certain temperature one's shoulders may be safely left bare. George Nepean has overheard her and comes forward as if to speak. Then he turns and goes out with an air of determination.

Sir Christopher tells the others that there have been fresh outbreaks among the slave-traders in Africa, and the Government will have to send Falkner out there again. The ladies agree that Freddie and Coke are not such trying husbands as Gilbert Nepean. They stigmatize him as a "terror," and express a hope that Jessica won't do anything foolish.

A merry peal of laughter outside heralds Jessica's approach, and a moment later she comes in. She is a very bright, pretty woman about twenty-seven, very dainty and charming. She tells them that Mr. Falkner kept begging her for a little souvenir and she took off a brooch. Then she saw he was going to be demonstrative, so she dropped it in the water. He jumped in, poor dear, and fished it up from the muddy bottom.

They tell her that George has been fizzing up all the evening, and now they are afraid he has gone to give Gilbert a hint. She finds that very vexing; she is afraid Gilbert will change his mind and not go away as he had been planning to do. Lady Rosamund advises Jessica to pull up, and Dolly says that Mrs. Crespin has been saying cattish things. Lady Rosamund doesn't like Mrs. Crespin but finds her tolerable because she says things that make Freddie wild. Rosamund whispers to Jessica what Mrs. Crespin said about Gilbert.

The ladies join in a burst of laughter. At its height Gilbert Nepean enters. He is a man rather over forty, rather stout, heavy, and with a dark complexion and strong, immobile, uninteresting features. His hands are large and coarse and he has a habit of biting his nails. He is dressed for travelling. The laughter suddenly ceases. While he is trying to light a cigar Lady Jessica makes faces behind his back.

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Lady Jessica and Gilbert are left together and he takes her to task for her "tomfoolery" with Falkner. After chaffing him for a while she says Mr. Falkner is deeply attached to her; she keeps him from telling her so because it is pleasanter to have him dangling for a little while.

Lady Jessica. Why shouldn't I? If Mr. Falkner admires me, isn't that the greatest compliment he can pay to your taste? And if he spares you the drudgery of being polite to me, flattering me, complimenting me, and paying me the hundred delicate little attentions that win a woman's heart, I'm sure you ought to be very much obliged to him for taking all that trouble off your hands.

Gilbert [*looks furious*]. Now understand me. This nonsense has gone far enough. I forbid you to have anything further to say to the man.

She says, of course, she shall respect his wishes—though she may not obey them. He is approaching her very angrily when George enters to say that the dog cart is ready, and he tells her she must come on to Teignwick the next day, where he is to be. She replies that she has promised to visit her cousin Barbara. He hesitates whether to go, but finally deciding not to stay on her account warns her that she will go too far some day and that he won't spare her.

Lady Jessica is a little frightened and is inclined to call him back, but finally turns to George and says it was very silly for him to tell Gilbert about Mr. Falkner and herself. George thought she had gone far enough. She prefers to decide for herself how far she can skate over thin ice. Falkner comes into the tent and George leaves them.

Falkner is about forty. He has strong, fine, clearly cut features. His hair is beginning to turn gray. His complexion is pale, almost gray, with continued work, anxiety, and abstinence. He asks when they shall meet again. As they are extremes, she says, she supposes they will meet again. She describes herself as the vainest, emptiest, most irresponsible creature in the world, whereas he is very serious. She cannot see why he should go back to Africa and spend the best years of his life fighting slave-traders and other windmills.

Falkner. I'm not going to spend the best years of my

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life in fighting slave-traders. I'm going to spend them—in loving you. [*Approaching her very closely.*]

Lady J. Oh, that will be worse than the windmills—and quite as useless. [*He is very near to her.*] If you please—you remember we promised to discuss all love-matters at a distance of three feet, so as to allow for the personal equation. Your three feet, please.

He presses the question of their next meeting, and she tells him she is going to her cousin's a little way along the river. On Monday she is going back to town.

Lady J. No; I don't think so. But a curious thing happened to me the last time I stayed at Barbara's. I sent Ferris on with the luggage in the early afternoon, and I walked to the station for the sake of the walk. Well, there are two turnings, and I must have taken the wrong one.

Falk. What happened?

Lady J. I wandered about for miles, and at half-past seven I found myself, very hot, very tired, very hungry, and in a very bad temper, at the Star and Garter at Shepperford. That was on a Monday, too.

Lady Jessica's maid, Ferris, brings her a wrap and goes out again.

Falk. How long do you mean to play with me?

Lady J. Am I playing with you?

Falk. What else have you done for the last three months? [*She looks hurt.*] My heart is yours to the last beat. My life is yours to its last moment. What are you going to do with me?

Lady J. Ah, that's it! I'm sure I don't know. [*Smiling at him.*] What shall I do with you?

Falk. Love me! love me! love me!

Lady J. You are very foolish!

Falk. Foolish to love you?

Lady J. No; not foolish to love me. I like you for that. But foolish to love me so foolishly. Foolish to be always wanting to play Romeo, when I only want to play Juliet sometimes.

Falk. Sometimes? When?

Lady J. When I am foolish, too—on a Monday evening.

Falk. Ah! will you drive me mad? Shall I tear you to pieces to find out if there is a heart somewhere within you?

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He is about to clasp her in his arms, but she struggles with him and says there is some one coming. He releases her as Sir Christopher saunters in at the back. Lady Jessica leaves them. Sir Christopher tells Falkner that he is going too far; he has had to explain to George Nepean that he means nothing. But Falkner replies that he does mean something. What that is is his business—and Lady Jessica's.

Sir C. I want to ask you, Ned Falconer, what the devil you mean by making love to a married woman, and what good or happiness you expect to get for yourself or her? Where does it lead? What's to be the end of it?

Falk. I don't know—I don't care! I love her!

Sir C. But, my good Ned, she's another man's wife.

Falk. She's married to a man who doesn't value her, doesn't understand her, is utterly unworthy of her.

Sir C. All women are married to men who are utterly unworthy of them—bless 'em. All women are undervalued by their husbands—bless 'em! All women are misunderstood—bless 'em again!

Falk. Oh, don't laugh it off like that. Look at that thick clown of a husband. They haven't a single idea, or thought, or taste in common.

Sir Christopher enumerates the possible endings of the affair, ticking them off on his fingers. The first is that Falkner shall leave off loving her. Falkner says that is impossible. Either one or the other might die, but there isn't much chance of that. They might die together by poison, cold steel, or Thames water. Possibility number four is that he can keep on dangling at her heels and being made a fool of without getting any "forrarder." Number five, a liaison with her husband's connivance. But Gilbert would not make a *mari complaisant.* A secret liaison is nearly impossible in society, and it means in the end every inconvenience and disadvantage of marriage without any of its conveniences and advantages, endless discomfort, worry, and alarm, constant sneaking and subterfuges of the paltriest kind. Then, there is the possibility of a great public scandal, a field day for Mrs. Grundy, or, lastly, Ned can pack up his things and start off to Africa.

Falk. [*with growing indignation*]. I love a woman with the deepest love of my heart, with the purest worship

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of my soul. If that isn't moral, if that isn't sacred, if that isn't righteous, tell me, in Heaven's name, what is? And you come to lecture me with your cut-and-dried worldly-wise philosophy, your mean little maxims, you come to lecture me on love and morality—you!

Sir C. Yes, I do! I may have had my attachments, I may have done this, that, and the other. I'm not a hero, I'm not on a pedestal, I never put on a moral toga. But I owe no woman a sigh or a sixpence. I've never wronged any man's sister, or daughter, or wife. And I tell you this, Ned Falkner, you're a fool if you think that anything can come of this passion of yours for Lady Jessica, except misery and ruin for her, embarrassment and disgrace for you, and kicking out of decent society for both of you.

Beatrice Ebernoe comes in. She is a tall, dark woman, about thirty, very beautiful and spirituelle. She tells Falkner that a messenger has come from the Colonial office with a very urgent letter for him. A servant brings in the letter. Falkner reads it and announces that more trouble is reported and he is wanted to go. He leaves them distractedly.

Sir Christopher says that he has given Ned a thorough "slanging," and that it was no use, but that he is just as bad as Ned when he is near her. She doesn't want him to speak to her of his love. Her husband has been dead for two years, but she can't quite forget him. Falkner comes back, still greatly distracted. Lady Jessica also enters. Falkner has decided that he will not go.

The Star and Garter at Shepperford-on-Thames is a small, high-class, riverside hotel. Falkner is ordering an elaborate dinner for two in a private sitting-room. Large French windows at the back upon a veranda, the pillars and roof of which are smothered with trails of flowers and creeping plants.

Presently Lady Jessica, most charmingly and coquettishly dressed in summer outdoor clothes, comes in rather tempestuously, making an explanation all in a breath. She has been staying with her cousin, was walking to the station, and by some unlucky chance must have taken the wrong turning. She is very hungry and wants to know if

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he would think it very dreadful if she asked him to give her just a mere mouthful of dinner.

The waiter inquires what he shall do if the friend whom Mr. Falkner was expecting should come. Falkner says to show him in. Lady Jessica regards the menu with mock alarm. She is curious about sauce Arcadienne, but he cannot tell her what it is. Love is the sauce of life, he says, and pleads with her to go to Africa with him.

Lady J. A philanthropist may not elope. A tenor may. Doesn't it show the terrible irony there is in the heart of things, that the best-meaning philanthropist in the world may not elope with his neighbor's wife? Pouding mousseline, sauce Eglantine. What makes you so eager to go hunting slave-traders in Africa?

She urges him to be sensible. What would come of it if she did love him. She should only break his heart, or, what would be far worse, her own.

Falk. Break it then—or let me break it. It's better to feel, it's better to suffer, than to be meanly happy. I love you, but I'd rather smother you in tears and blood than you should go on living this poor little heartless, withered life, choked up with all this dry society dust. Oh, can't I make you feel? Can't I make you live? Can't I make you love me?

Lady J. [*after a moment's pause, looking at him with great admiration*]. Perhaps I do in my heart of hearts!

He springs to seize her. She struggles and tears herself free. Then she asks him to go and stop a hand organ which has been playing outside. Flurried and out of breath, she stands at the window fanning herself for a moment and then steps out on the veranda. Suddenly she comes back in alarm. George Nepean appears on the veranda, comes up to the window, and looks in. She tries to speak indifferently, and explains that she is attending a small dinner.

George was going on to Hersham and was waiting for the ferry when he caught sight of her. She asks him if he has noticed a nest of cygnets outside, and is leading the way when Falkner returns to the room. George stares at him, looks significantly at the sideboard and table, says Gilbert must know of this, and takes himself off.

Lady J. [*who has stood very frightened and confused*]. Did you hear? What can I do? What can I do?

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Falk. [*calm, almost triumphant*]. You must join your life to mine now.

Lady J. No, no! If you wish me ever to have one kind thought of you, get me out of this! Do something, find somebody to dine with us. Understand me, I know myself, if this leads to a scandal I shall hate you in a week. Oh, do something! do something!

Falk. Be calm. Be sure I'll do all I can to save you from a scandal. If that is impossible, be sure I'll do all I can to protect you from it.

Lady J. Ah, no! Save me from it. I can't face it. I can't give up my world, my friends. Oh, what can I do? I'll go back to town——

She suggests getting some one to dine with them. At that moment they hear Freddie Tatton's voice outside. He is talking to Lady Rosamund. She tells Falkner that he must go after George Nepean and bring him back. He goes out and Lady Jessica calls Rosamund in at the window. In some surprise she asks what the matter is.

Lady J. Everything. You and Freddie must stay and dine here.

Lady R. We can't, we're going on to dine with Mrs. Crespin at her new place, and we've got Jack Symons with us.

Lady J. Va pour Jack Symons, whoever he may be! He must stay and dine, too!

Lady R. Impossible. Mrs. Crespin has asked some people to meet us. As her place is on the river Jack proposed we should row down and dress there. What are you doing here? I thought you were at Barbara's.

Lady J. I was going back to town to-night. I thought I'd walk to the station—it's so delightful across the fields. Well, you know the path, I went on all right till I came to those two turnings, and then—I must have taken the wrong one, for, instead of finding myself at the station, I found myself here.

When she had been wandering around for an hour, she says, she was very hungry, and remembering that Mr. Falkner was staying here came to ask him to give her some dinner. It was foolish, especially so as George Nepean was waiting at the ferry and caught sight of her.

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Falkner comes back after a while without George, who drove to the post office where he sent off a telegram, and then continued on his way.

Lady Rosamund offers to write to George and tell him that she dined with Lady Jessica. She sits at a desk to write on the hotel paper. Lady Jessica improves on the idea. She tells her to ask George to call on her in town the next morning. She will also drop in. Then they will see what frame of mind he is in and can explain things accordingly. They can manage him so much better between them. Lady Jessica gives her her stylographic pen to write with and dictates the letter. She asks George to say nothing to his brother until after he has seen Lady Rosamund, when he will see how trifling the matter is and may do as he pleases. When Lady Rosamund has finished she forgets the pen, which is inscribed with Lady Jessica's name, and leaves it on the writing-desk.

Lady R. [*has caught sight of the menu, has taken it up*]. Jess, you'll go straight to the station now?

Lady J. Yes, I'm awfully hungry——

Lady R. Yes, but I don't think this dinner would agree with you. [*Puts the menu down significantly.*]

Lady J. Very well. But I am hungry.

Lady R. And, Jess, if I get you out of this—you won't take the wrong turning again?

Lady Jessica swears on her honor that she will never be guilty of such a silly freak again. Lady Rosamund goes out at the window.

At this juncture word is brought by Lady Jessica's maid that Gilbert is coming back that night. The maid has a cab waiting outside and says if they make haste they can just catch a train. Lady Jessica goes hurriedly, and Falkner is kicking a hassock around savagely when he hears Sir Christopher Deering speaking outside. The waiter shows him in, announcing "the friend of the dinner." Sir Christopher decided to drop in and have dinner with Falkner. He is surprised at the menu.

Falkner excuses himself for a moment and Sir Christopher looks over the assortment of wines on the sideboard with great satisfaction. Then he discovers the pen on the writing-desk and reads the inscription. He puts the pen in his pocket. The waiter comes in and says that Mr.

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Falkner has gone to London and asks Sir Christopher to make himself at home with the dinner.

Lady Rosamund's drawing-room, in a very elegant modern apartment in London, is the scene of the next act in our comedy. When Lady Jessica arrives Rosy has already received a note from George Nepean saying that he will be glad to come and hear any explanation, but that he is going to meet his brother first and will tell him just what he saw.

Lady Rosamund has snubbed Freddie so severely that she feels quite sure he will not venture to follow her to London. She has barely mentioned the fact to Lady Jessica when Freddie arrives. He has come up to town with Mrs. Crespin, who wants the address of a cook that Lady Rosamund can give her. It is evident that he is trying to screw up his courage for a tremendous row.

Fred. [*with great dignity*]. I have come up to town this morning because for the future I intend to place everything in this house on a new basis, an entirely opposite basis from that on which it now stands.

Lady R. You're going to turn all the furniture upside down! Oh, I wouldn't!

Fred. Hitherto I have been content to be a cipher in this establishment. I will be a cipher no longer.

Lady Rosamund tells Freddie to run away to his club and takes Lady Jessica to her room. At this moment Sir Christopher Deering is announced. Freddie continues his plaint.

Fred. [*firmly*]. Yes. I may be an ass, but I'm not a *silly* ass. I may be a fool, but I'm not a *d—co—d* fool! Now there's something going on this morning between Rosamund and Jess. They're hobnobbing and whispering, and when two of 'em get together——

Sir C. Oh, my dear fellow, when two women get together do you think it can ever be worth a man's while to ask what nonsense or mischief they're chattering? By the way, did you say that I could see Lady Jessica?

Fred. She's upstairs with Rosy. I'll send her to you. Deering, if you were married, would you be a cipher in your own house?

Sir Christopher and Lady Jessica presently find them-

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selves alone together and he returns her pen which he found at the inn. She inquires in some embarrassment if he heard anything about her being there. The fact is that she started to walk to the station and must have taken the wrong turning, for she found herself at the Star and Garter where she asked Mr. Falkner to give her some dinner. George Nepean has told her husband, and of course he will believe the worst.

Sir Christopher sees only two ways of getting out of the muddle: first, by telling fibs, and secondly, by telling the truth, which he strongly recommends. Lady Jessica declares she cannot do that. Her husband would be sure to find out that they did not meet by accident, although really it was a mere indiscretion, nothing more.

Sir C. A mere indiscretion that will never be repeated.

Lady J. A mere indiscretion that will never be repeated. You believe me?

Sir C. [*looking at her*]. Yes, I believe you, and I'll help you.

Lady J. Thank you! Thank you!

Sir C. Now did Falkner expect you?

Lady J. He ought not.

Sir C. He ought not. But he did.

Lady J. I told him I shouldn't come.

Sir C. Which was exactly the same as telling him you would.

Upon perceiving that Lady Jessica and Lady Rosamund have already decided on possibility number one, Sir Christopher says that he put it first out of natural deference and chivalry toward the ladies. The only objection he has to telling fibs is that you get found out. She thinks that does not necessarily follow if one arranges things not perhaps as they were, but as they ought to have been. He grasps the theory; the lie becomes a sort of idealized and essential truth. But he is not a good hand at idealizing.

Lady Rosamund has had to tell Freddie about everything, she says, and he is forthwith sworn in as one of the conspirators. Sir Christopher inquires what is the exact form which the explanation is to take.

Lady R. Jess and I had arranged to have a little *tête-à-tête* dinner at Shepperford. Jess got there first. I hadn't arrived. George saw Jess at the window, and came in.

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At that moment Mr. Falkner happened to come into the room, and Jess, knowing that appearances were against her, was confused, and couldn't on the spur of the moment give the right explanation.

Sir C. I suppose the waiter will confirm that right explanation?

Lady J. The waiter? I hadn't thought of that. Waiters will confirm anything, won't they? Couldn't you settle with the waiter?

Mrs. Crespin calls to get the address of the cook. She is a little surprised at finding such a gathering. She thinks Lady Jessica looking pale and worried, and casually mentions the fact that she ran across George Nepean a few minutes earlier at the railway station. She thought he seemed very strange. He was going to the station to meet his brother, and he made so much of it. When she had a husband she used to go to the station to meet him.

Lady J. [*a little triumphantly*]. Ah, Rosy and I know better than to kill our husbands with too much kindness.

Mrs. C. Still, I think husbands need a little pampering——

Sir C. Not at all. The brutes are so easily spoilt. A little overdose of sweetness, a little extra attention from a wife to her husband, and life is never the same again!

Fred. [*who has been waiting eagerly to get a word in*]. I suppose you didn't mention anything to George Nepean about our dining with you last evening?

They all look at each other nervously. Mrs. Crespin is on the alert. She did mention the fact that they were over, and hopes that it doesn't matter much. She goes, and they are quite nonplussed. Their fib won't do. Lady Rosamund calls Freddie an incomparable nincompoop, but he points out that it is just as well that he has saved them from telling George Nepean what he would know was a lie. That is true, but Sir Christopher says that if he is to embark any further in these imaginative enterprises he must ask Freddie to keep a silent tongue.

Lady Jessica is beside herself when Mrs. Coke is announced, and Lady Jessica pounces upon her and informs her that they dined together the evening before at the Star and Garter. Mrs. Coke, of course, will say anything that is necessary, but she doesn't understand. Lady Jes-

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sica takes her aside and whispers to her eagerly. Sir Christopher thinks he is not required any further, the fewer the partners in the affair the better, he says, if this is to be a going concern.

Lady Rosamund declares Sir Christopher's mere presence would be an immense moral support to them. He can corroborate and come to their assistance whenever they are in the lurch. Besides, everybody knows he is such an honorable man. Dolly Coke, meanwhile, is getting further facts. When George went away from the inn Lady Jessica was so upset at his suspicions that she went to town without any dinner. Dolly wants to know where she herself dined.

Before this question is answered George Nepean is announced. He enters and bows very frigidly.

Lady R. [*very cordially*]. My dear George, don't take that tragic tone. [*Insists on shaking hands.*] Any one would suppose there was something dreadful the matter. I've just explained to Sir Christopher your mistake of last night.

George. My mistake?

Lady J. You shouldn't have left so hurriedly, George. I sent Mr. Falkner after you to explain. Dolly, tell him.

Dolly. Jess and I had arranged to have a little dinner all by our two selves——

George. Indeed!

Dolly. There's nothing strange in that, Sir Christopher?

Sir C. Not at all. I am sure any person of either sex would only be too delighted to dine *tête-à-tête* with you.

Dolly. And when I got there I found poor Jess in an awful state. She said you had come into the room and had made the most horrid accusations against her, poor thing!

Lady Rosamund finds the whole thing so ridiculously simple that she thinks George ought to beg Lady Jessica's pardon.

George. I will when I am sure I have wronged her.

Fred. Oh, come, I say, George! you don't refuse to take a lady's word——

Lady R. Freddie, subside! [FREDDIE *sits down, very angry.*]

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Dolly [*to* GEORGE]. Poor Jess was so upset by what you said that she couldn't eat any dinner, she nearly had hysterics, and when she got a little better she came straight up to town, poor thing!

George. What was Mr. Falkner doing there?

Lady J. He was staying in the hotel and happened to come into the room at that moment. [*A little pause.*]

Lady R. Is there anything else you would like to ask?

George. No.

Lady R. And you're quite satisfied?

George. The question is not whether I'm satisfied, but whether Gilbert will be. I'll go and fetch him. Will you excuse me?

Sir C. [*stops him*]. Nepean, I'm sure you don't wish to embitter your brother and Lady Jessica's whole future life by sowing jealousy and suspicion between them. Come, now, like a good fellow, you'll smooth things over as much as you can.

George. I shall not influence my brother one way or the other. He must judge for himself.

[*Exit.* SIR CHRISTOPHER *shrugs his shoulders.*

Dolly. I got through very well, didn't I? [*To* LADY JESSICA.]

The footman comes in to say that Mr. Coke is waiting for Mrs. Coke below. Mrs. Coke explains that she arranged to meet her husband and take him on to the dentist's. Lady Jessica insists that Dolly must stay now and tell Gilbert. She suggests asking help of Mr. Coke, too, but Dolly will not hear of it. He wouldn't understand.

Archibald Coke enters. He is prim and starchy, in very correct formal dress. Lady Jessica informs him that Dolly cannot accompany him. It appears that Coke has a terrible dread of gas, and is afraid that they will give him too much some day. Sir Christopher offers to go with him, but Coke persists that his wife is the one to see that the gas is properly administered. Lady Jessica tells him firmly that his wife must remain to tell Gilbert that she dined with her the evening before. Coke can make nothing of this, and Sir Christopher turns away with a groan as Lady Jessica begins afresh on her rigmarole.

She was going to the station from Barbara's and she must have taken the wrong turning—so it happened that

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she asked Mr. Falkner for a little dinner, and George chanced to come in, and actually suspected her of dining with Mr. Falkner. Coke puts down his foot flatly. He forbids Dolly to say that she dined with Lady Jessica. Dolly says that she couldn't leave poor Jess in a scrape, and that she is already entangled in the affair herself, having told the fib to George. Coke is obdurate. Nothing that they can say has any effect on him. Gilbert arrives on the scene with George.

As Gilbert looks about at the gathering he remarks that he thought he was coming for a private explanation. Sir Christopher tries to steal out, but Lady Rosamund catches him at the door and pulls him back by the coat tails, while Freddie takes his hat away. Coke shows symptoms of great discomfort. Sir Christopher takes the bull by the horns by saying to Gilbert that he is sure he doesn't wish to make more than necessary of Lady Jessica's trifling indiscretion. Gilbert replies that he wishes to make no more of it than the truth, and he will take care that no one makes any less of it. He turns to Lady Jessica furiously and says she was dining with "this fellow, Falkner, last evening." She denies it. If he goes on speaking in such a tone, she says, she will not answer. He asks if some one else will oblige him, and turns to Coke who starts and drops his stick.

Sir C. My dear fellow, I only know what I've heard, and hearsay evidence is proverbially untrustworthy. Now, if I may offer you a little advice, if I were you I should gently take Lady Jessica by the hand, I should gently lead her home, I should gently use all those endearing little arts of persuasion and entreaty which a husband may legitimately use to his wife, and I should gently beguile her into telling me the whole truth. I should believe everything she told me, I shouldn't listen to what anybody else said, and I should never mention the matter again. Now, do as I tell you, and you'll be a happy man to-morrow, and for the rest of your life. [*Pause.*]

Gil. [*looks at* LADY JESSICA]. No. [SIR CHRISTOPHER *shrugs his shoulders.*] I came here for an explanation, and I won't go till I've got it.

Lady R. My dear Gilbert, we're patiently waiting to give you an explanation if you'll only listen to it. Dolly,

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do tell him how it all happened, and let him see what a donkey he is making of himself.

Dolly. Yes, Gilbert, I wish you wouldn't get in these awful tempers. You frighten us so that in a very little while we shan't know whether we're speaking the truth or whether we're not.

Gil. Go on!

Dolly. Jess and I had arranged to have a little *tête-à tête* dinner at Shepperford and talk over old times all by our two selves—[COKE *gets very uncomfortable*]—hadn't we, Jess? Rosy, you heard us arranging it all?

Borne out by Lady Rosamund, Dolly goes on to relate how Falkner happened to come into the room, and then George, who wouldn't wait to hear Jess's explanation. When she, Dolly, got there she found Jess in strong hysterics. Finally Jess came up to town without any dinner. Dolly gets rather mired as to where she herself dined, but finally says she had some cold chicken and a little tongue when she got home. There is a pause, and she discreetly appends a tomato salad. Coke is very much shocked. He starts to protest, but Sir Christopher nudges him. Gilbert asks what he knows about the matter. He appeals to Sir Christopher, who turns away.

Gil. You allow your wife to dine out alone?

Coke. Yes—yes—on certain occasions.

Gil. And you knew of this arrangement?

Coke [*puffs his cheeks*]. Yes—at least, no—not before she told me of it. But after she told me I did know.

George. But Jessica said that she expected a small party.

Dolly. I was the small party.

Gil. [*to* COKE]. What time did Dolly get home last evening?

Coke. Eh? Well, about——

Dolly. A little before nine.

George. Impossible! I was at Shepperford after half-past seven. If Lady Jessica had hysterics, and you stayed with her, you scarcely could have reached Kensington before nine.

Dolly. Well, perhaps it was ten. Yes, it was ten.

Gil. Coke, were you at home last evening when your wife got back?

Coke. I? No—yes, yes—no—not precisely.

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Gilbert becomes very indignant, but Coke refuses to be cross-questioned, and Gilbert again demands that Lady Jessica give her version of "this cock-and-bull story." At this moment Falkner enters. Gilbert goes to Falkner and demands of him to say whether he was at Shepperford the evening before, and whether Lady Jessica was with him. Falkner replies that he was there, and that Lady Jessica was dining there with Lady Rosamund. Lady Rosamund corrects this slight error. It was Mrs. Coke with whom Lady Jessica was dining.

Falk. Then I misunderstood. Does it matter?

Gil. [*going up to him*]. Yes. I want to know what the devil you were doing there.

Sir C. Nepean! Nepean!

Gil. Do you hear? What the devil were you doing there? Will you tell me, or—— [*He throws down his gloves and tries to get at* FALKNER, SIR CHRISTOPHER *holding him back.*]

Lady J. [*rises very quietly*]. Mr. Falkner, tell my husband the truth.

Falk. But, Lady Jessica——

Lady J. Yes, if you please—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Tell him all. I wish it.

Gil. You hear what she says? Now, then, the truth—and be damned to you!

Falk. [*looks around, then after a pause, with great triumph*]. I love Lady Jessica with all my heart and soul! [GILBERT *makes a movement to get at* FALKNER. SIR CHRISTOPHER *restrains him.*] I asked her to come to me at Shepperford last evening. She came. Your brother saw us and left us. The next moment Lady Rosamund came and she had scarcely gone when the maid came with your telegram and took Lady Jessica back to town. If you think there was anything more on your wife's side than a passing folly and amusement at my expense, you will wrong her. If you think there is anything less on my side than the deepest, deepest, deepest love and worship you will wrong me. Understand this. She is guiltless. Be sure of that. And now you've got the truth, and be damned to *you!* [*Goes to door at back—turns.*] If you want me, you know where to find me. [*To* LADY JESSICA.] Lady Jessica, I am at your service—always!

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[*Exit at back. They all look at each other.*
Sir C. [*very softly to himself*]. Possibility Number Two —with a vengeance!

The drawing-room of Sir Christopher's flat in Victoria Street is in great confusion, for he is packing in preparation for going to Africa. Mrs. Ebernoe calls in response to a message that Sir Christopher has sent her, and he tells her that he has three most important duties to fulfil. He must pack, persuade Ned to go with him, and make her promise to be his wife when he comes home again. He points out what a lot of trouble it would save if she would consent without delay. He will do the love-making when he gets back. She wants to think it over. He gives her five minutes, and says that if she won't have him, she doesn't love her country. She throws herself into his arms, willing not only to marry him, but to go with him to Africa.

Gilbert succeeds Mrs. Ebernoe. He has been down to Shepperford and learned that Sir Christopher dined there. He asks if he can take Falkner's word that his wife is guiltless. Sir Christopher's reply that if she were not Falkner would lose little time about taking her off her husband's hands, impresses Gilbert. Sir Christopher says that Gilbert is doing his best to make Falkner successful. When a man marries a charming woman if he doesn't continue to make love to her some other man will. He advises Gilbert to go home and not say a word to his wife about what has happened, but to take her out to the very best dinner that London can provide. Just as Gilbert decides to accept this advice Falkner enters the room. The two men stand looking at each other for a moment and then Gilbert goes out.

Falkner is elated. He has some good news: she loves him. He reads a note in which she says she has learned the worth of his love, and tells him to be ready to come the moment she sends for him. Falkner says that he will take her out to Africa with him if he can persuade her to go. Sir Christopher tells him that she would be very much in the way. He is going to be married, and Lady Deering would not recognize Lady Jessica. Falkner turns on his heel and says good-night very curtly.

Sir C. No. Ned, you're still up that everlasting *cul-de-*

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sac—playing the lover to a married woman, and I've got to drag you out of it.

Falk. It's no use, Kit. My mind is made up. Let me go.

Sir C. To the devil with Lady Jessica? No, I'm going to stop you.

Sir Christopher declares that Falkner will be a coward if he fails to put the crown on his life work.

Sir C. Coward! And there's only one epitaph to be written on you by-and-by—"Sold his honor, his fame, his country, his duty, his conscience, his all for a petticoat!"

Falk. Very well, then, when I die write that over me. I tell you this, Kit, if I can only win her—and I shall, I shall, I feel it—she'll leave that man and come to me; and then!—I don't care one snap of the fingers if Africa is swept bare of humanity from Cairo to Cape Town, and from Teneriffe to Zanzibar! Now argue with me after that!

Sir C. Argue with you? Not I! But I wish there was some way of kidnapping fools into sense and reason and locking them up there for the rest of their lives.

Lady Jessica and Lady Rosamund come in. Lady Jessica shows delighted surprise at seeing Falkner and goes to him cordially. Lady Rosamund tries to restrain her and appeals to Sir Christopher, to whom she explains that she and Lady Jessica have spent the day talking over the muddle and have come to talk it over with him. Lady Jessica doesn't care how she gets out of it, or whether she does get out of it. Sir Christopher says that he is quite sure that Falkner, in proposing to ruin Lady Jessica's reputation and make her miserable for life, is actuated by the very best intentions.

Sir C. Now! I've nothing to say in the abstract against running away with another man's wife! There may be planets where it is not only the highest ideal morality, but where it has the further advantage of being a practical way of carrying on society. But it has this one fatal defect in our country—it won't work! You know what we English are, Ned. We're not a bit better than our neighbors, but, thank God! we do pretend we are, and we do make it hot for anybody who disturbs that holy pretence. And take my word for it, my dear Lady

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Jessica, my dear Ned, it won't work. You know it's not an original experiment you're making. It has been tried before. Have you ever known it to be successful? Lady Jessica, think of the brave pioneers who have gone before you in this enterprise. They've all perished, and their bones whiten the anti-matrimonial shore. Think of them! Charley Gray and Lady Rideout—flitting shabbily about the Continent at cheap *table d'hôtes* and gambling clubs, rubbing shoulders with all the blackguards and demi-mondaines of Europe. Poor old Fitz and his beauty—moping down at Farnhurst, cut by the county, with no single occupation except to nag and rag each other to pieces from morning to night. Billy Dover and Polly Atchison——

Lady J. [*indignantly*]. Well!

—cut in for fresh partners in three weeks. That old idiot, Sir Bonham Dancer—paid five thousand pounds damages for being saddled with the professional strong man's wife. George Nuneham and Mrs. Sandys—George is conducting a tramcar in New York, and Mrs. Sandys—— Lady Jessica, you knew Mrs. Sandys, a delicate, sweet little creature, I've met her at your house—she drank herself to death, and died in a hospital. Not encouraging, is it? Marriage may be disagreeable, it may be unprofitable, it may be ridiculous, but it isn't as bad as that! And do you think the experiment is going to be successful in *your case?* Not a bit of it! No. Ned, hear me out. [*Turns to* LADY JESSICA.] First of all, there will be the shabby scandal and dirty business of the divorce court. You won't like that. It isn't nice! You won't like it. After the divorce court, what is Ned to do with you? Take you to Africa? I do implore you, if you hope for any happiness in that state to which it is pleasing Falkner and Providence to call you, I do implore you, don't go out to Africa with him. You'd never stand the climate and the hardships, and you'd bore each other to death in a week.

As he talks Lady Jessica moves away from Falkner a little. Sir Christopher assures them that whichever way they turn they will find themselves stranded in some shady hole or corner. Furthermore, not only will her life and reputation be wrecked, but his, too. He pleads with Lady Jessica to send Ned with him to finish his work. Her hus-

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band, he says, is sorry for what is past and has promised to treat her more kindly in the future.

Lady Jessica calls Sir Christopher the most horrid man she ever met. The worst of it is he has told the truth. Falkner wants to speak to her alone, but she asks what use it would be, as they have got to part. She will not ruin his career. He can always cherish his fancy portrait of her and never find out how very unlike her it is, and she will read about him in the newspapers and be very proud. She tells Lady Rosamund to come with her. Falkner insists that she shall at least say good-bye to him alone. She follows him behind the curtains into the library.

Gilbert is announced and the next moment comes in very excitedly. He did not find his wife at home and fears she has gone to Falkner. Sir Christopher calls Lady Rosamund who had also withdrawn behind the curtains when Falkner was announced. She comes back.

Gil. [*trying to get to curtains*]. Where is Jessica?

Sir C. [*stopping him*]. No. I'm to take the message. Lady Jessica, your husband is waiting to take you to supper. You've only just time to go home and dress.

[LADY JESSICA *draws curtain aside, turns and throws a last agonized adieu to* FALKNER *who stands speechless and helpless.* LADY JESSICA *then controls her features and comes out to* GILBERT. *The curtains close.*]

Gil. Will you come home and dress and go to the Savoy to supper? [*Offering arm.*]

Lady J. Delighted. [*Taking his arm.*]

Lady Rosamund says she cannot accept Gilbert's invitation to go with them. She must get back to her poor old Freddie. She goes. As Sir Christopher says good-night to Lady Jessica and Gilbert, Lady Jessica sees Falkner looking at her through the curtains and seems to be on the point of breaking away from her husband and going to him. She does not yield to the impulse but goes out with Gilbert. Falkner comes forward in despair, throws himself into a chair and buries his face in his hands.

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THE TYRANNY OF TEARS*

By C. Haddon Chambers

First played in London at the Criterion Theatre on April 6, 1899.

Argument: Mrs. Parbury is a domestic tyrant in a petty way, monopolizing her husband to the exclusion of his friends, and always bent upon getting her own way at any cost. She becomes jealous of her husband's secretary and insists upon the young woman's dismissal. The problem is whether she will gain her point or whether she and her husband will become alienated.

Clement Parbury, in the study of his home at Hampstead Heath, is trying to finish a critical article, and has been made rather cross by distracting interruptions. He is dictating to his secretary, Hyacinth Woodward, a handsome, innocent, yet determined looking girl of twenty. Mrs. Parbury comes in to listen. She is a pretty, fragile little woman of about twenty-eight, and is charmingly dressed.

The presence of his wife is only a further distraction to the author, and he suggests showing her the article when it is done. Upon his inquiring falteringly if she is not going, she answers with deep reproach in her voice and looks as if about to cry. She says she does not wish to remain where she is unwelcome, but thought she had a right to be where her husband was, that the privileges of a wife were at least equal to those of a secretary.

At last Parbury gives up the attempt to work and devotes himself to comforting his wife. He explains that the reason why Miss Woodward does not disturb him is because she is merely like a piece of furniture in the room, whereas his wife bristles with emotions and compels atten-

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tion. Thereupon Mrs. Parbury says that she quite understands now that he does not love her; when they were first married he didn't object to her being in the room when he was working. At that time, he admits, he did not say so, but he was younger and had more patience and stronger nerves. His writing hours, he says, should be sacred, as she would understand if she were a writing woman.

Mrs. Parbury. I'm sure I'm very sorry I'm not a genius, but you understood that when you married me, didn't you?

Parbury. Yes, darling, I quite understood that! [*He appears to say this quite unconsciously.* MRS. PARBURY *turns to him deeply offended, then suddenly starts to leave the room. He quickly meets her and takes her hands.*] I only knew you were the best little woman in the world!

She says she is going to send Miss Woodward to him, as he prefers the secretary's society to hers. He reminds her that he wanted a male secretary.

Mrs. P. Yes; to make a companion of at my expense. You were always a man's man! If I had had more experience I would have known that by the host of men friends you had when we married.

Par. [*cheerily*]. I haven't them now, dear.

He says that he is very much in love with her, but she declares all he feels at the present moment is the sort of insolent pity the strong have for the weak. He doesn't believe she is unconscious of her power. He reminds her that she always gets her own way. Of course, he says, that must always be the best way. She becomes somewhat mollified as he notices the prettiness of her ear, but wishes that he loved her in the way she loves him.

She loves to breathe the air he breathes, she tells him, to hear his voice even when it's dictating a dry article, to listen to his footsteps, to watch the changing expressions on his face. She lives by the warmth his life gives her. He declares that he is not bothered about the article, and to prove it consents to let her have tea served in his study. She goes out.

A few minutes later she puts her head in to say that she has got rid of a would-be intruder, a horrid person named Gunning. He rushes to the window, dismayed to think

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that his wife has turned away his old friend whom he has not seen for more than five years, ever since he has been married, in fact. He succeeds in calling Gunning back. As they chat it appears that all of Parbury's men friends have dropped away one by one. Gunning tells Parbury that he has a perfect wife and a charming secretary.

Par. Is Miss Woodward charming? On my word, I hadn't noticed it, but I'm in love with my wife, you see.

Gunning. Of course you would be the last to discover that your secretary was personally pleasing.

Par. You're a sinister scoundrel, George, and coarse to a fault. Now, tell me what you've been doing all these years—shedding your illusions apparently.

Gun. I've had none to lose since I grew up. I got rid of mine about the time of measles and whooping-cough.

Par. It's a pity.

Gun. Not at all. One can't attain the proper philosophical attitude toward life while one nourishes illusions; one can never gain perspective.

Gunning agrees to come in again that evening for dinner on condition that Parbury will go yachting with him over the week-end. Parbury is enthusiastic. Mrs. Parbury enters, wearing a bright smile which fades when she sees the visitor. Presently it occurs to Parbury how he can finish his article in three sentences, and he slips out.

It is not in the nature of things, Mrs. Parbury is saying, that college friendships, however strong, can last always. Time estranges, and fate drives people into different ways of life. She inquires if Mr. Gunning is married. He is not.

Mrs. P. Well, I was going to say that in marriage a man changes so much. He becomes more—more——

Gun. [*gently*]. Respectable?

Mrs. P. Well, I wasn't going to say quite that; though, as you suggest it, no doubt it is true. I was going to say more responsible. He enters into a broader, a fuller life; he gains in nobility, don't you think?

Gun. [*amused*]. Oh, no doubt. Clement has improved enormously!

Mrs. P. I'm so glad you recognize that. You may smoke, Mr. Gunning, if you care to.

To Mr. Gunning the state of marriage has always appeared to be a state of warfare. She protests.

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Gun. I admit the case of you and Clement to be an exceptional one. I'm talking of ordinary cases—the average marriage; there you will find, according to my observation, an endless war—a war of self-interests, a war of opposing emotions, a war of irreconcilable nervous organizations——

Mrs. P. Oh, Mr. Gunning!

Gun. Viewed from the hilltops rather a pitiful sort of war, in which can be won neither the full joys of love nor the complete glories of battle.

When Parbury returns he asks Gunning if he has told his wife about the yachting.

Gun. Why, of course not. That's your affair, my dear fellow.

Par. [*his hand on* GUNNING'S *shoulder*]. Mabel, dear, we're going yachting for a few days. I think I want a little change.

Mrs. P. [*coming toward them, brightly*]. Oh, what a good idea! When do we go? [PARBURY *and* GUNNING *look at each other.*] Are you coming, Mr. Gunning?

[PARBURY *presses* GUNNING *forward.* GUNNING *looks round at* PARBURY *reproachfully.* PARBURY *goes up stage.*]

Gun. [*embarrassed*]. Well, it's my yacht, Mrs. Parbury, but she's very small—only a little tub of a thing; and—— [*Looks at his watch.*] By Jove! I'll never be able to dress and get back for dinner if I don't hurry. [*Gets his hat and gloves and goes quickly toward the door.*] I need only say *au revoir;* don't trouble, Clement, I'll find my way out—*au revoir!*

He goes out. Mrs. Parbury is puzzled.

Mrs. P. What does he mean by a little tub of a thing? Surely we're not——

Par. No, dear, certainly not. You're quite right. I wouldn't think of letting you run any risks.

Mrs. P. Then we're not going?

Par. No, dear; that is to say, Gunning and I are going.

Mrs. P. [*rising, aghast*]. Without me?

Par. Only for a few days, of course. [*Laughing feebly.*]

Mrs. P. You are not serious?

Par. Quite! [*His laugh becomes feebler.*]

Mrs. P. But—but you never go away without me!

Par. I haven't hitherto, but——

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Mrs. P. Well? [*Appears about to cry.*]

Par. I've been working very hard, you know, lately. I feel I want a change.

Mrs. P. [*tearfully*]. It doesn't occur to you that I might want a change.

Par. Well, have one, dear. Aunt Martha would be delighted to have you at Oaklands.

Mrs. P. I don't want to go to Aunt Martha. How would you like to go to Aunt Martha?

Par. [*suppressing a groan*]. What is it you *do* want?

Mrs. P. [*quickly*]. You! I want to be with you! It's very simple—it's not asking very much. If you don't like my being with you, why did you marry me? [*Taking out her handkerchief.*]

Par. Now, dear, please don't cry! [*Aside.*] If she does, I'm done for! [*Aloud.*] It's only commonsense that you can't go knocking about with a couple of men in a tub of a boat.

Mrs. P. Of course I quite know now that you don't love me. [*Bursts into tears. Sits on sofa.*]

Par. [*with real irritation*]. Oh, damn it! [*Goes up, but turns quickly and comes down to her.*] 'Pon my soul, you make me almost hate——

Mrs. P. Of course you hate me. Your old friend has done that for me. You are breaking my heart!

Par. [*who has recovered control of his temper and resumed his natural bantering tone*]. Not at all, dear. [*Sits at his desk and affects to be busy.*] I was only going to say that I hated—now, what the deuce was it I hated?—oh, I know—to see a woman cry. I do think a woman is wise who does her crying in private, and yet—I wonder—they know best—millions to one they know best. I must write something about it.

Mrs. P. [*rises, goes to top of table, R. She is wiping her eyes, her back to him*]. Of course you're going all the same?

Par. [*affecting great pre-occupation*]. Going? Going where?

Mrs. P. With Mr. Gunning. [*Pause. She continues to cry gently.*]

Par. Gunning—Gunning!—who's Gunning? Oh—George—yachting, you mean! Not I! I'm staying here.

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Mrs. P. [*comes toward him gladly, her arms extended*]. Clement!

Par. Eh? Oh, forgive me for a few minutes. [*Writes.*]

Mrs. P. [*reproachfully*]. I was only going to kiss you.

Par. [*writing*]. All right, dear—presently—presently, there's a dear girl! [MRS. PARBURY *has a slow, silent exit, looking back at him. He doesn't look up, but goes on writing. When the door closes, he puts down his pen.*] Oh, the tyranny of it! The tyranny of it!

[*Slow Curtain.*

That evening after dinner Parbury tells Gunning that he isn't going yachting. His wife wept.

Gun. Unanswerable argument.

Par. Quite. George, what the devil is a man to do?

Gun. I knew a man who once interfered between a husband and wife who were disagreeing. The husband and wife each got a black eye. The man got two.

Parbury says he is suffering from the tyranny of tears.

Par. Tears! And over such absurdly paltry things! Oh, the farcical tragedy of it all! I wished to go shooting for a few days. Tears! I fancied dining and spending the evening with an old chum. Tears! I would go on a walking tour for a week. Tears! Some one would ask me for three days' hunting. Tears! Tears, you understand, always on hand. Tears—tears—tears *ad*—— [*Pulling himself up.*] No.

Gunning tells him to go on. He is interested.

Par. That's all. I drifted, almost unconsciously, right up to to-day, for all the world like the man in the moral story-book one read as a child on Sundays, who drifted in his boat on the Erie River toward Niagara. To-night I'm conscious—I'm awake—I can feel the water gliding along the boat's keel. I can see Niagara. I don't like it. What the devil's one to do?

Gun. Get out and walk. [*Pause. They smoke.*]

Par. Of course I shall change it all. I must, but it will be beastly work.

Gun. Beastly. When do you begin?

Par. When occasion serves. I can't go back over this yachting business. I've said I'm not going.

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Gun. Quite right. [*Slight pause.*]

Colonel Armitage, Mrs. Parbury's father, who has dined with them, comes in. He is a well-preserved man of sixty-five, very carefully dressed, something of an elderly dandy. A moment later Mrs. Parbury joins them, and then Miss Woodward. Colonel Armitage goes out into the garden and Parbury and his wife follow them.

Miss Woodward begins to correct the proof sheets of a novel to save Mr. Parbury the trouble of doing it the next day. Gunning questions her about herself, and she says she will give him all the information there is if he will promise to go away.

Miss Woodward [*putting down her pen, and resting her cheek on her hand*]. I'm the thirteenth daughter of a parson. Why my parents had thirteen daughters I don't know; but I suppose it was because they are very poor. We were all given the names of flowers—Rose, Lily, Tulip, Mignonette—I can't remember them all—but Hyacinth fell to my lot. Why we were called after flowers I don't know; but I suppose it was because we are none of us the least like flowers. My eldest sister married my father's curate. I don't know why, but I suppose it was because she came first and is the plainest in the family.

Gun. [*laughing*]. Yes, well?

Miss W. [*speaking in an even, emotionless way*]. Two other of my sisters run a kindergarten, and one other is a governess. Personally, I would rather be a domestic servant. The others remain at home, help in the house, and await husbands. I fear they will wait in vain, because there are so many women in our part of the country and so few men. For my part, I seized an early opportunity of learning shorthand and typewriting—and—well, here I am. Now you know the story of my life. [*She returns to her work.*]

Gun. I'm afraid it was deuced impertinent of me to ask.

Miss W. Not at all—only eminently manlike. [*Pause. She works, he smokes.*]

He thinks she is very ambitious, for although she has such a good position she says she is only just beginning to look for her happiness. She asks if he was ever poor.

Miss W. I mean being one of fifteen in family—large inferior joints to last for days—hot, cold, hashed, minced,

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shepherd's pie—[GUNNING *shudders at this*]—too much potatoes—too much boiled rice—too much bread and dripping—too much weak tea—too much polishing up of things not worth polishing up—too much darning on too little material—and forever giving thanks out of all proportion to the benefits received. I wish some one would write the history of a hat or a frock—I mean a hat or a frock that has marched steadily and sullenly under various guises through an entire family such as ours, from the mother down to the youngest girl. What might be written of the thoughts that had been thought under such a hat, or of the hearts that had felt under such a frock!

Gun. Why don't you write the story?

Miss W. Perhaps some day I shall try. [*Returns to her work.*] In the meantime, you ought to go. You promised, you know. You have nothing more to learn. I don't think in all my life I've talked so much about myself as I have to you, a stranger. [*She keeps her eyes on her work.*]

Gun. You have been engagingly frank. I do hope I shall have another opportunity——

Miss W. Not at all likely, Mr. Gunning. [*Pause.*] Good-night. [*Still without looking up.*]

Gunning looks at her, goes up to the window, turns, looks at her again and says good-night. He goes out into the garden and she continues her work for a few moments, then drops her face on her hand in her favorite attitude, soliloquising. Rather than go home again she would wish to die. She takes up Mr. Parbury's photograph and addresses it. He has never noticed her as Mr. Gunning has. She doesn't think she wants him to, but she wants to stay near him because he is so strong—and so weak, and so kind and so foolish.

She doesn't notice Mrs. Parbury come in. Slowly she raises the photograph to her lips. Mrs. Parbury drops a cup and saucer and, after a pause, snatches the photograph. As soon as she recovers her self-control sufficiently she asks Miss Woodward what train she intends taking; she doesn't suppose she can stay there? How can she dare to ask, she a daughter of a clergyman? Mrs. Parbury informs the girl that she is to take the 9:35 in the morning.

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Miss Woodward returns firmly that she will do nothing of the kind. Ignoring this statement, Mrs. Parbury says there is no reason for her husband's knowing the reason of Miss Woodward's departure. She is to have a month's salary, of course.

Miss W. Is there any real occasion for my leaving?

Mrs. P. Haven't you sufficient delicacy of feeling left to teach you that?

Miss W. [*warmly*]. I don't think I need lessons of delicacy of feeling from you. [*Slight pause.*] I'm sorry I said that, and it means a great deal for me to say I'm sorry. I'm sorry, too, about the photograph. I think it all might be forgotten.

Mrs. P. Forgotten!

Miss W. After all, I'm only a girl; and I've worked very hard for Mr. Parbury. I think you might be more lenient.

Mrs. P. [*at fireplace*]. I'm very sorry for you, Miss Woodward; but I owe a duty to myself and to my husband. You must go in the morning. [*She moves to return to garden.*]

Miss Woodward feels that her chances in life are being ruined for a very small and innocent folly. She becomes fiercer, and says plainly that she is in Mr. Parbury's employment and will take her dismissal only from him. Mrs. Parbury promises her she shall have it. Miss Woodward has resumed her work when Mr. Parbury comes in, and upon noticing what she is doing exclaims that she is indefatigable.

Mrs. P. No doubt Miss Woodward wishes to finish the work to-night as she is leaving to-morrow.

Par. Leaving to-morrow?

Miss W. I think Mrs. Parbury is mistaken.

Par. [*to* Mrs. Parbury]. What do you mean, dear?

Mrs. P. I wish her to go.

Par. Why?

Mrs. P. I can't tell you. It is not a thing you would understand. It is simply impossible for her to remain. In her heart she knows I am right. [*Slight pause.* Parbury *goes to* Miss Woodward.]

Par. Are you satisfied here?

Miss W. Perfectly.

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Par. You have no wish to go away?

Miss W. Not while you wish me to remain.

Par. Do you know why my wife wishes you to go?

Miss Woodward does, but has promised not to tell. Mrs. Parbury has nothing to add. She repeats that it is impossible for Miss Woodward to stay. Parbury has made up his mind that there is something very foolish under all this; Miss Woodward is invaluable to him; he doesn't see why women should make a fuss about little things. He tells them to make up, to weep if they like, though personally he would rather they didn't. Mrs. Parbury doggedly repeats her ultimatum. Parbury asks Miss Woodward to leave them.

Mrs. P. [*turning to him with assumed brightness*]. Now, darling, it will be different. Of course, I couldn't say much before her. You were quite right to be nice and courteous to her now she is going.

Par. But I assure you she is not.

[*They are C.* MRS. PARBURY *takes his arm caressingly.*]

Mrs. P. But she is—believe me, she is. Of course, we don't want to be hard on her, and she shall have a month's salary and a strong recommendation.

Par. [*disengaging his arm*]. My dear Mabel, I absolutely refuse to act in the dark. I hate mysteries. If you care to tell me what all this bother is about, I'll judge for myself what's the right thing to do. [*Sits on sofa.*]

Mrs. P. I can't—it's impossible. There are some things that men can't be trusted to know about. You must leave this matter to me. [*Sits next him.*]

Par. That I quite decline to do.

[*She again takes his arm and talks rapidly, gradually rather hysterically, toward the end appearing about to cry.*]

She points out that he can easily get another secretary. She asks if she hasn't always been a good wife to him, let him have his own way, and not bothered him more than she could help. This is only a little thing and he must let her have her own way. He must trust her absolutely. He knows anything she would do would be only for his own good. Parbury, however, remains perfectly firm. Heretofore he has been weak and yielding, he says, and had

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JOHN DREW AS MR. PARBURY, LAURA HOPE CREWS AS MRS. PARBURY, AND MARY BOLAND AS MISS WOODWARD

Parbury has made up his mind that there is something very foolish under all this. As Miss Woodward is invaluable to him, he tells them to make up, to weep if they like, though personally he would rather they didn't

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gradually allowed her to acquire a great deal more power than she knows how to use wisely. She declares he is raving.

Par. Listen, my dear, listen. What's been the result? You've taken from me my habits. You've taken from me my friends. You've taken from me my clubs. You've taken from me my self-esteem, my joy in life, my high spirits, the cheery devil that God implanted in me; but, damn it, you must leave me my secretary.

Mrs. P. [*excitedly walking the stage*]. Oh, I understand now. You use this exaggerated language, you make these cruel accusations, you work yourself into a passion, because you have grown to think more of Miss Woodward than of me.

Par. Now you know that to be a purely fantastic interpretation of what I said. [*She takes out handkerchief.*] I observe with pain, too, that you are about to cry again.

Mrs. P. [*puts handkerchief up her sleeve, controls her anger, and becomes very determined*]. You are quite wrong. Probably I shall never again know the relief of tears. Your callousness and obstinacy seem to have dried up all the tenderness in me. Miss Woodward leaves this house in the morning or *I* leave it to-night.

Par. [*coming to her*]. Oh, come, come, Mabel, that is too ridiculous.

There is no way out of the deadlock. Mrs. Parbury directs her maid to pack a few things. It is in vain that Parbury remonstrates. Her father comes in with Gunning, and she asks him to take her home with him. She has not believed for a moment that Clement will let her go, that her dreadful menace will fail. Parbury on his part does not imagine that his wife will execute her threat. Colonel Armitage asks what it is all about. Parbury calls on Gunning to explain.

Gun. [*down R., almost angrily*]. Now, how the deuce should I know? Colonel, you would be very kind if you would use your authority to prevent Clement dragging me into his domestic difficulties. Married men have a cowardly way of endeavoring to involve their friends. Perhaps you have noticed it.

Colonel. I have, Mr. Gunning. My experience of married life extended over a period of twenty-six years.

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Gun. May one discreetly express the hope that they were very happy years?

Col. Very happy years, with, however, I must admit, intermittent troubles. Mabel's mother was one of the best women in the world, but, if I may say so without disloyalty, she was just a little—a little—er—give me a word.

Par. Would the word *exigeant* apply?

Col. Admirably. Perhaps you have noticed in Mabel the slightest tendency? Eh?

Par. Well, well!

Col. Her mother's jealousy, too, was something amazing. I hope I'm not conceited, but in those days I was just a little—er—popular, and perhaps I ought not to confess it, a little—er—give me a word.

Gun. Human. [*They laugh slightly.*]

Col. [*with affected severity*]. Clement, I hope you are not too human?

Parbury says that Mabel is merely using pressure to get her own way. The Colonel thinks she will be more reasonable the next day. Mrs. Parbury comes in with her hat on. She asks Clement which way it is to be. His reply that it is to be his way quite stuns her. She goes out with her father. Parbury is astonished to see her really go.

In the rose garden the next morning Gunning has a chat with Miss Woodward before Parbury comes down. The two men sat up till three o'clock the night before. Miss Woodward does not want him to pay her compliments. He was sure she wouldn't, but feels it to be a deprivation, a remark that she stigmatizes as the cloven hoof of compliment. He says he would like to get on well with her, and they look in each other's faces. Then he asks for a rose. She will not give it to him. She gives one to Mr. Parbury, however.

The two men have rather a hard time to worry down any food, and Parbury suggests splitting a bottle of champagne. The butler is slightly startled. It is years, Parbury remarks, since he has taken wine in the morning. Gunning remembers that it was rather a way of his in the pre-domestic period. When the bottle comes they grasp their eggs at last with an appearance of cheerfulness.

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Evans asks if he may speak to Mr. Parbury about cook, who wants to know, so to speak, where she stands now mistress has gone away.

Par. I presume my wife has a right to go away for a few days without cook's permission.

Evans. Yes, sir, certainly. But excuse me, sir; there's been gossip. Emma, the 'ousemaid, accidentally overheard something between Mrs. Parbury and her maid. Servants is as nervous as race-horses, sir, and cook's nerves is particularly sensitive. So to speak, dismoralization's set up in the kitchen.

Par. Well, you had better go and set it down again, Evans, and don't bother me any more.

Evans. Yes, sir, certainly. Excuse me, sir, I was to ask you who cook is to take her orders from.

Par. In my wife's absence from me, of course.

Evans. Not from Miss Woodward, sir?

Par. [*staring slightly*]. Why, has Miss Woodward given any orders?

Evans. No, sir, but cook thought——

Par. That will do, Evans.

Evans. Yes, sir.

Evans goes out. Parbury and Gunning exchange looks and drink their glasses of wine. Parbury refills the glasses.

Colonel Armitage comes in. He was up till four in the morning, and after that slept badly. He taps the wine bottle with his stick, evidently somewhat surprised, but says he supposes that Parbury knows how to regulate his life, and asks if he has an extra glass.

Par. I trust, Colonel, you won't accuse me of leading you from the path of morning abstinence.

Armitage. Really, Clement, I think this display of ill-humor is scarcely in—er—give me a word.

Gun. Good taste.

Arm. Exactly! Good taste, considering that we are suffering from the effects of your domestic—er—er——

Gun. Maladministration.

The Colonel remarks that Mabel's mother would cry at times, and if she got well off the scratch she was hard to beat, but as for Mabel, the dear child could have given her mother a stone and romped home. Clement is not in very great favor. As for Gunning, he has been referred

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to as a serpent. But fond as the Colonel is of Mabel, he thinks he has a right to know how long Clement intends to leave her on his hands.

He trusts he will not be misunderstood in saying that he requires notice before receiving visitors. Since he regained his liberty, or since the death of Mabel's mother he means, he has drifted into his own little ways. Parbury tells the Colonel to send his wife back, and leaves him with Gunning. The Colonel now says confidentially that he had been looking forward to keeping a rather pleasant appointment to-night. He takes a miniature out of his pocket and looks at it. He goes on to remark that his daughter wishes to see Mr. Gunning, thinking he holds the key to the situation.

He implores Gunning to do his utmost to make it up between Mabel and Clement. To put it bluntly, he shall not be able to keep his engagement to-night if he still has his daughter on his hands, in which case his friend would be vexed—very vexed. He should have mentioned, he says, that on her mother's side his friend is Spanish. He stands on a chair and makes a signal to Mabel, who is outside the garden, and tells Gunning to hide the wine. When Mrs. Parbury comes in the Colonel withdraws.

Mrs. Parbury says she hopes Gunning is satisfied with his work. She and her husband were living in perfect harmony, in perfect happiness, until he turned up. He declares that he did not interfere in any way, but she says that he aired his pernicious opinions to her, and she has a right to assume that he aired the same opinions to Clement. She has discovered that his influence over Clement is the influence of ridicule—the ridicule of the untamed for the tamed.

Mr. Gunning is ready to do anything he can to put matters right. Mrs. Parbury tells him something must be done to remove Miss Woodward from the house. She informs him that the wretched girl is in love with Clement. Gunning starts from his chair as if shot. She says she saw the girl kissing Clement's photograph. Gunning asks if Clement knows.

Mrs. P. No; I thought it wise not to tell him.

Gun. [*heartily*]. You were right—very right.

Mrs. P. I'm glad you think so.

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Gun. Some men are so weak.

Mrs. P. [*drawing herself up again*]. Mr. Gunning!

Gun. So easily flattered.

Mrs. P. [*with more emphasis*]. Mr. Gunning!

Gun. In nine cases out of ten it's vanity that leads men astray.

She reminds him that they are speaking of her husband, but has no doubt that he is accustomed to judging other men from his own standpoint. They are agreed that the girl must not remain in the house, and that Clement must not know the truth. Gunning has an idea. Mrs. Parbury makes it clear that it is most important to the future happiness of her husband and herself that he should be the first to give way.

The Colonel's voice outside, singing, "I'll sing thee a song of Araby," gives warning of Clement's approach, and Mrs. Parbury goes out. Parbury is very irritated at being unable to work. Gunning essays his task of sophistry, trimming his sails on a course divergent from that of the day before. He tells Clement that by a petulant discontent he has precipitated an awkward crisis. Gunning has been thinking things over, he says, and come to the conclusion that the love of a good woman is a priceless possession. Only the unimaginative never change their views. He now thinks Parbury has been wrong.

Par. I should have gone on putting up with the existing conditions?

Gun. They might have been worse.

Par. Submitting to the old tyranny?

Gun. A wholesome discipline, believe me.

Par. What of our spoilt yachting cruise?

Gun. I ought never to have proposed it. Think what a loving wife must suffer under the circumstances—lying awake at night listening to the wind howling in the chimneys and sobbing in the trees. It doesn't bear thinking of.

Par. Quite so—quite so! And about our dear old friends whom I was obliged to drop. You may remember you made some very strong comments on my weakness yesterday.

Gun. I was hasty. I admit it.

Gunning advises discreet surrender. Why impose conditions on a weak, loving, trusting woman, he says.

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He urges his friend to show a little heart. Parbury says that it means the sacrifice of his secretary, but Gunning replies that obviously Miss Woodward cannot remain in the house during Mrs. Parbury's absence.

Par. Certainly not—certainly not! [*He goes slowly over to* GUNNING, *and looks him in the face, smiling.*] And so that's your secret.

Gun. What do you mean?

Par. All this solicitude for my happiness—this sudden change of your point of view—this miraculous conversion of the cynic into the peacemaker—all inspired by a pair of blue eyes. An arrow from Cupid's bow has winged its way into this wooden heart—[*tapping* GUNNING'S *chest*]—and "Earth has won her child again," as Goethe puts it.

Gun. Don't talk rot!

Parbury says that he will leave him with Miss Woodward, who enters. He tells the girl that he is afraid his domestic complications have made it awkward for her to live in the house. She thinks he is discharging her, but he suggests that she should go somewhere else to sleep. She replies that she would rather go altogether. He doesn't understand, and asks her to tell him the cause of her quarrel with his wife. That, she says, is impossible. She declares passionately that he must not try even to guess.

The light breaks on Parbury at last. Miss Woodward turns away with head bowed. There is a long pause. At first Parbury doesn't appear ill-pleased. He looks down at the rose in his buttonhole, and begins to raise it half-tenderly to his face. Then his face becomes grave, and he slowly removes the flower from his coat, and places it on the table. He takes one of Miss Woodward's hands. He says he asks nothing, guesses nothing. She tells him to say only that she may go. She sees the rose, takes it up, and as he talks, she slowly picks it to pieces, dropping the petals on the ground.

Par. [*coming down to back of table and speaking very gently*]. I suppose there must soon come a time to every girl of heart who goes out alone into the world—a time when life seems to press hardly upon her and weariness of the unaccustomed stress makes her heart falter, and when she longs to take rest for a time in the old childhood, in

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the home she perhaps once thought to be dull and dreary, in the mother's arms that have always been ready to open with love for her.

Miss W. Don't! [*Sinks into chair, R. C.; buries her face in her hands.*]

Par. Perhaps you feel that that time has come now. If so, go home for a little while, and get rest and fresh strength for the battle of life. Come back to the fight soon. You are bound to succeed, because you have talent and ambition and courage. [*Slight pause. He takes her hand.*] Don't cry. There is nothing you have lost or suffered yet quite worth a tear——

Enter MRS. PARBURY, *R.*, GUNNING, *and* ARMITAGE.

—nothing quite worth a tear. [*He is bending toward her.*]

[MRS. PARBURY, *who is slightly in advance of* ARMITAGE *and* GUNNING, *stops near* MISS WOODWARD *and* PARBURY, *brought up short by seeing their intimate position.*]

Mrs. P. [*in a low voice, speaking slowly, with deep emotion*]. I suppose—I have still a right to ask—for some explanation?

Par. Of what, dear?

Mrs. P. Of this familiarity.

Par. You shouldn't mistake sympathy for familiarity. I was only giving Miss Woodward some advice about her affairs.

Mrs. P. What affairs?

Par. I said *her* affairs, dear, not ours.

Mrs. P. If that is all the explanation—— [*Turns away.*]

Miss W. Mr. Parbury very kindly and very properly advised me to go home for a time—[*she comes down to* MRS. PARBURY *and speaks to her alone*]—and I—I descended to your level—I cried!

At lunch time Miss Woodward will not join the others in the dining-room but remains at her work in the study, where Evans brings her something to eat.

Evans. Yes, Miss. Excuse me, Miss, but we're all very sorry you're going—particularly cook. Cook's very strong in her attachments.

Miss W. [*looking into a drawer*]. It's very kind of cook.

Evans. Cook's words was, "This'll be a dull 'ouse when the little sunbeam's gone."

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Miss W. That will do, Evans.

Evans. Excuse me, Miss, it was meant kindly. We was all on your side in this embroglio. [*A pause.* MISS WOODWARD *is obstinately silent, and goes on working.*]

Mrs. Parbury comes in to say good-bye to Miss Woodward and to express a formal wish for that young woman's future success. She says she does not blame her so much for falling in love with her husband. The girl declares she never did. The interest which she began to take in Mr. Parbury, she explains, sprang in a way from the maternal instinct.

Mrs. P. If you go through the world exercising your maternal instincts on other women's husbands, Miss Woodward, you'll end badly.

Miss W. I don't propose doing so. I'm going home to try it on my sisters.

Mrs. P. If you had known anything of life you would have seen that I had sufficient of the maternal instinct for the needs of my husband.

Miss W. I'm very, very sorry; please don't be angry, but I didn't think it found the right expression. It was very impudent of me, I know.

Mrs. P. Very.

Miss W. It seemed to me that you smoothed his hair when he'd rather it was rough, and roughed it when he'd rather it was smooth. [*Demurely.*] I think that expresses what I mean. I have a beastly sly way of noticing everything, and I began to feel sorry for Mr. Parbury. And being quite as egotistical as most girls, I began to think I should have made him a better wife than you.

Mrs. P. Oh! [*Rises.*]

Miss W. Perhaps in the remotest corner of my heart I think so still.

Mrs. P. [*indignant*]. Well?

Miss W. But I never loved him—never in the least degree.

Mrs. Parbury, during the foregoing, has listened with anger gathering in her face, but at the end, after an apparent momentary struggle with herself, she bursts into laughter.

Mr. Gunning also wishes to have a little talk with the secretary. She cuts him off, but he is very persistent. He

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wants to know what she thinks of him. She hasn't thought of him, she says, and is afraid she has not time to begin now. Her cab is coming so soon that she hopes he will not attempt to detail the story of his life. At last he gets a little cross, and says he supposes she is anxious to get back to her twelve sisters, but he had an alternative to suggest.

Miss W. You? You don't want a secretary, do you?

Gun. I—I wanted to tell you in a different way, but you won't let me. I want you as my wife.

Miss W. Your wife, Mr. Gunning?

Gun. It may appear sudden and cold-blooded—but your cab is coming.

Miss W. You've taken my breath away. How exciting it is when it does come. I really don't know what to say. I know there is a usual thing. It isn't "To what am I indebted for this honor," is it?

Gun. I don't know. I never asked a girl before.

Miss W. We don't know each other in the least.

Gun. That's where we would start with a big advantage. We'd have all the pleasure of finding each other out. Anyway, you are not displeased.

She says she supposes she would make a good match by saying yes, but they don't love each other.

Gun. Another big advantage. Love is the rock upon which so many well-intentioned young persons split. They engage to marry each other while the intelligence is perverted, the reason unbalanced, and the judgment obscured by an overpowering sentiment. They enter into a solemn life-binding contract in a highly emotional and altogether unnormal moral condition. The disastrous results of such folly we see examples of daily. We will escape that snare. [*He comes close to her.*] Of course if the sentiment should subsequently come, if that particular kind of emotion should by chance supervene, we'll deal with it as best we may.

Miss W. [*sits on arm of sofa*]. Still there must be something in love-making. I remember my sister and the curate seemed to have a very good time. We all thought them fussy, but I know they liked it.

He made love to her in the garden that morning, he says. He urges her to consent. Evans reports the arrival of the

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cab. Gunning tells him to send it away. She says to let it wait. Gunning smiles with some satisfaction.

Miss W. Good-bye, Mr. Gunning. If you were entirely different from what you are, I think I could have liked you; or if I were entirely different from what I am, I think I might have married you. But you are hopelessly modern and cold-blooded, and I am only an old-fashioned, healthy English girl, and a healthy English girl doesn't want to make experiments, she wants to be loved.

[*Suddenly* GUNNING *throws his arm round her, and bends forward to kiss her. She quickly raises her clenched hand as if to strike him in the face. He looks her in the eyes without flinching.*]

Gun. Perhaps she wants a master.

Miss W. [*softly*]. Perhaps. [*Her hand slowly drops; he kisses her.*]

Col. [*outside L.*]. No, my dear; I can't wait any longer.

Gun. [*in a low voice to* MISS WOODWARD]. The garden. Will you come and find me a rose?

Miss W. Yes.

They slip out as Colonel Armitage comes in with Mr. and Mrs. Parbury. These three are silent and uneasy. There is a considerable pause, during which they are occupied with avoiding each other's eyes.

Col. I really think I have cause to be angry. A more depressing function than your luncheon party to-day I've never experienced. I think I have a right to a little cheerfulness in my middle age. I'm sure I've earned it. I've had a great deal to put up with in my life.

Par. No doubt, no doubt.

Col. Of course I have always accepted my full share of the blame. That I have felt to be only right and manly. [*Pause. He looks at* CLEMENT.] As for my late dear wife, her heart was rarely deaf to a proper expression of regret. The memory of her I feel to be a blessing to this day. [*He blows his nose sympathetically.*] One thing I can tell you, Mabel, that when your dear mother and I made it up—well, we *did* make it up. I am not without some very agreeable recollections—most agreeable. [*Pause. He comes to* MRS. PARBURY.] I trust you won't require me to-night, my dear. I have to attend a Masonic Banquet.

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The Colonel departs, vastly satisfied with his own tactfulness. There is a constrained silence. Parbury is particularly uneasy. Mrs. Parbury says gloomily that she supposes their happy days are gone. He thinks it would be far wiser to look for new ones than to weep for the old ones.

Mrs. P. I'll not cry, dear; I promise you that. [*Pause. Suddenly rises and turns to him.*] Clement, can't we start again?

Par. Perhaps. But we must consider first where we now are and the direction in which we should go.

Mrs. P. Perhaps in your heart you are blaming me more than I deserve—I mean about Miss Woodward.

Par. You chose to keep the motives of your conduct a secret from me.

Mrs. P. I may have been wrong. I saw her kiss your photograph.

Par. [*starts slightly*]. Why didn't you tell me? [*Pause.*] Why didn't you tell me?

Mrs. P. I thought—I thought it would be wiser not to.

Par. What have I ever done to earn so low an estimate of my character from you—that I am not to be trusted with the knowledge that a foolish girl had kissed my photograph?

Mrs. P. Nothing, dear; nothing. But I was jealous—furious. I am sorry. [*She is half-turned from him. He smiles very kindly, and half makes a step forward as if to take her in his arms, then restrains himself.*]

Mrs. P. [*drooping*]. You are very, very angry with me? He is very pained, but not angry.

Par. [*comes to her*]. Does love without respect count for very much? Would you like to go back to the old way—the way of petty tyranny—the way of the cowardly, unnecessary tear—the way of gaining your own ends at all costs—the way of being a spoilt child instead of a thoughtful and considerate woman—the way of my own contemptible weakness?

Mrs. P. I never looked upon it in that light. I thought I was happy then.

Par. Because you never dreamed that my love was beginning to wear badly.

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Mrs. P. [*startled*]. Clement! . . . Oh? [*Goes to him.*] Good God!

Par. I don't want ever to think or speak of it again; but to-day I must, for if we are honest with each other we may be able in time to save ourselves from that most pitiable and hideous of all states of existence—what is called "a cat and dog life." Have you never seen it—that domestic flower with the rotten heart? The thin outside petals of courtesy, of hollow words of endearment before others, mask the ugly truth from the casual and unobservant; but the intimate friends know, and the prying eyes of the spiteful are undeceived. That man and woman who appear in public wearing the veneered ghost of a smile are walking in hell. Think of their private lives—the slow death of love; the hearts poisoned with bitterness; the ever-growing rancor; the bandied insolences; the swift thoughts, black as murder; the final dull monotony of aching hatred. Do you think such cases rare? Every rank of society has its examples. Do you think such a couple have deliberately sought their hell? Oh, no; they may have started as fairly as we did. Their love has not been slain by a blow, it has been pecked to a cupboard skeleton by littlenesses—little jealousies, little selfishnesses, little insults, little tyrannies, little intolerances.

Mrs. P. Clement, you terrify me. [*C.R.*] Oh, I am ashamed—ashamed. You have made me shudder at the old way. Dear, if I have lost a particle of your love I'll win it back. You will show me the new way, won't you?

Par. The new way for us is the old way for the wise. It is a pleasant way strewn with flowers, the flowers of self-abnegation—of sweet reasonableness—of patient tolerance—of enduring trustfulness. Walking in that way we seek diligently for the happiness, not of ourselves, but of each other. Rising in the morning we say, not, I will find happiness to-day, but I will give happiness to-day. In that way lie peace, the fulfilment of our better selves, the full golden harvest of love.

[*As he speaks these words with deep sympathy, standing a little away from her, she gradually draws nearer to him.*]

Mrs. P. I will walk in that way with you, Clement.

[*She stoops, and taking one of his hands kisses it.*

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Pause. He stoops and raises her, and takes her in his arms.]

Enter MISS WOODWARD *and* GUNNING. GUNNING *wears a rose in his coat.*

Gun. Really—I beg your pardon.

Mrs. P. Don't trouble about us any more. We're reconciled. [*She remains in her husband's arms.*]

[GUNNING *turns smilingly to* MISS WOODWARD *and takes her hand.*]

Miss W. [*smiling back upon* GUNNING]. Don't trouble about us any more. We're engaged.

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HEROD*

By Stephen Phillips

First played in London at her Majesty's Theatre on October 31, 1900.

Argument: Herod, warned of whisperings in Jerusalem of some new king who is to supplant him, is persuaded to put to death the young brother of his queen. Discovering Herod's guilt, the queen spurns him, and he, convinced that she has aroused the people against him, has prepared poison for him, and is loved by one of his officers, is induced in a fit of passion to give sanction, which he instantly forgets, to the murder of the queen also. How will Herod meet the shock of learning that the queen is dead?

It is the evening of the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. The great hall of audience in the palace of Herod at Jerusalem is festooned with garlands. Through the colonnade at the back is seen the sacred Hill of Jerusalem, with the Temple courts and Castle of Antonia. On the right a flight of stairs ascends to the gallery leading to the royal apartments. Gadias, the chief councillor, sits reading documents at the foot of the throne. A faint sound of acclamation is heard without.

Three messengers enter hurriedly. They have come in hot haste from Samaria and tell the guard that Herod's throne is in danger, perhaps his life, and demand an immediate audience. The guard replies that the king will soon descend to greet Aristobulus, the queen's young brother, newly appointed High Priest. It is Aristobulus, the messengers say, whom the fanatics of Samaria would throne.

Salome, the sister of Herod, tells Sohemus, an officer of the guard, that the people point fingers in the streets at her and taunt her as Herod's low-born sister. She holds

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the queen to blame, but Sohemus assures her that the king will hear nothing against the queen. She demands to know of Gadias when she can see Herod.

Gadias replies that the king rests, for all night he wanders through Jerusalem and listens in disguise to public talk, resorts with travellers, feasters, and gossips of every kind. At this moment Gadias hears people outside shouting for Aristobulus. Salome declares she will bear no more with Mariamne, the queen, although the blood of all Maccabees runs in her veins. She goes out. Gadias mutters contemptuously that her complaint is a woman's quarrel, nothing more.

Pheroras, the brother of Herod, comes forward to the chief councillor and asks him if the guard can be relied on. Gadias answers for their loyalty. They speak of the plot in Samaria to crown Aristobulus. Various councillors have come in gradually. At a cry from without one of them says there is menace in the sound. They say that Aristobulus is the darling of the multitude, and sprung of the old blood. Gadias reminds them that Herod is their sole protection against the power of Rome.

Music is heard outside. It grows louder as a procession from the Feast of Tabernacles enters the hall. After them follow Cypros and Salome, mother and sister of Herod, and finally Mariamne, the queen, leading Aristobulus by the hand. As she takes place by the foot of the throne the door of the private apartments open and Herod, ceremonially dressed, comes down the stairs and seats himself on the throne. There is a mighty acclamation for Aristobulus and then a faint one led by Gadias for Herod.

Mariamne, leading Aristobulus before Herod, thanks him for honoring her house by making her brother the High Priest. Aristobulus is presented in his official capacity to the gathering, and cheering spreads from those in the hall to crowds outside. Children are brought forward to touch his robe and old men kiss his hands. Mariamne tells her brother that her love has so hovered round him that she has suffered like a mother for him.

The people are now dismissed, and all go out but Herod and Gadias.

Herod. A child! Gadias, wandering night by night
Among the people of Jerusalem,

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I hear a whispering of some new king,
A child that is to sit where I am sitting;
The general boding hath ta'en hold of me.
If this thing has been fated from the first——
Gadias. It is the fault of dreamers to fear fate.
Her. [*dreamily*].
And he shall charm and smoothe, and breathe and bless,
The roaring of war shall cease upon the air,
Falling of tears and all the voices of sorrow,
And he shall take the terror from the grave,
Gad. The malady is too old and too long rooted.
The earth ailed from the first; war, pestilence,
Madness, and death are not as ills that she
Contracted, but are in her bones and blood.
Her. And he shall still that old sob of the sea,
And heal the unhappy fancies of the wind,
And turn the moon from all that hopeless quest;
Trees without care shall blossom, and all the fields
Shall without labor unto harvest come.
Gad. Dangerous—laborers thrown from work rebel.
Her. A gentle sovereign. Ah, might there not be
Some power in gentleness we dream not of?
Gad. The gentle are tame birds that feed the hawk.
Her. To overcome by other ways than steel.
Gad. A somewhat sudden change of policy.
It has not been our way; and was not when
You murdered the whole Sanhedrin,
Nor when
You struck down Malchus on the Tyrian beach,
Or bribed Marc Antony to slay——
Her. Ah, no—
'Tis not for us. A momentary thought
Like a strange breeze in darkness on the cheek.
Still must we trample, crush, corrupt, and kill.
And he shall be king of the Jews.
Gad. Perhaps Aristobulus, then?
Her. Wild is the time;
Abroad, Octavius and Marc Antony,
Like rival thunders from opposèd poles,
Are rushing to that shock which splits the world.
Now Antony is grappled to my side,
And on his victory this realm depends.

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Messengers enter hastily followed by a number of councillors and captains, and announce to Herod a great disaster. They say his friend Marc Antony is dead. General consternation follows. Antony's fleet fled from Octavius Cæsar at Actium and Antony fell on his sword. Herod is shaken by the news and asks his councillors if they cannot hear the legions on the wind. Some advise him to muster his forces and others to make submission, but Herod answers that he will go to meet Octavius Cæsar at Rhodes.

The councillors attempt to dissuade him in vain. He dismisses them and entrusts to Pheroras, his brother, the command of the armies, to Gadias, the chief councillor, the national policy, and to Sohemus he commends the queen. Herod, left alone with Gadias, expresses his regret that he must leave Mariamne behind. Gadias reminds him that he leaves Aristobulus also behind, and tells him of the three messengers who came from Samaria with the news of the plot to crown Aristobulus, and to have Herod's life. Messengers, Herod says, can tell him nothing now. He is unmoved by the rumor, and will not strike at Aristobulus. If he did so he should also be striking at Mariamne, and possibly at himself.

Sohemus enters hastily and announces that the city is up. The multitude roars about the temple, cheering for Aristobulus and calling Herod an upstart. Gadias withdraws and Herod turns to Sohemus. He reminds the officer that he has raised him to a high position, and says he may have need of him. When he shall put a ring on the finger of Sohemus that will mean that some one must be removed for the welfare of the state.

Immediately after this Aristobulus enters to bid Herod good-bye. He is going bathing in the pool and will not be present when Herod starts on his journey. The king asks him if there are not dangers lurking in the great pool, unknown depths and entangling reeds. Aristobulus does not fear them. Herod says farewell and makes as if to touch the head of the young man, but cannot do so. As soon as Aristobulus has left Sohemus starts forward. Herod holds out a ring and slips it on the finger of the guard, motioning meaningly to him to follow Aristobulus. Sohemus

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goes out. Herod exclaims, "He hath her eyes! Thou art, too, like Mariamne. Ah!"

An attendant enters to inform Herod that the queen is asking for him.

Her. The queen? ah, no. Not yet—not on the instant.
Say I will come at dusking, ere I go.
No, no; I cannot look on thee so soon.
I have struck him down, and fear is come on me;
Yet I ne'er feared before; not when I slew
The assembled Sanhedrin. Why do I tremble?
Not that I have contrived this murder, this
Most politic, most necessary act.
Then why this apprehension mystical,
This beaded forehead, and this quailing flesh?
Dimly I dread lest having struck this blow
Of my free will, I by this very act
Have signed and pledged me to a second blow
Against my will. What if the powers permit
The doing of that deed which serves us now;
Then of that very deed to make a spur
To drive us to some act that we abhor?
The first step is with us; then all the road,
The long road is with Fate. O horrible!
If he being dead demand another death.

[*Walks backward into* MARIAMNE'S *arms, she having entered softly behind him.*]

Mariamne asks Herod if he is in peril, seeing the perspiration standing on his brow. He replies that nothing is the matter. She begs him to leave the audience hall and come with her until it is time for him to start. They slowly ascend the gallery steps. Halfway up he makes as if to go back. He tells her he has something he must do instantly. Putting her arm about him, she says it cannot be so urgent. With a shudder he exclaims, "the pool!" She coaxes, drawing him along, and they ascend together to the royal apartments.

Various women enter the gallery. Among them is Bathsheba, Mariamne's maid. They speak of a breeze that has sprung up mercifully as a great relief, bringing the scent of balsam and citron groves. They pass through the hall, giving place to Cypros and Salome. Salome exclaims that she can hardly suppress her hatred for the

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WILLIAM FAVERSHAM AS HEROD AND JULIE OPP AS MARIAMNE

Mariamne, leading Aristobulus before Herod, thanks him for honoring her house by making her brother the High Priest

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queen, but Cypros says that she can patiently prepare revenge.

Cypros. Remember Herod's love—
That madness, easy to be worked upon—
For Mariamne. Then her love, how deep
For young Aristobulus.

Salome. Yet how, how?

Cyp. Still clearer then? Remember Herod's rage
At acclamations on her brother heaped;
Remember the set teeth and veilèd glare.

Sal. Oh—I begin to see.

Cyp. No more is ripe.
I keep this phial here close to my heart.
Did not the great astrologer foretell
"Herod shall famous be o'er all the world,
But he shall kill that thing which most he loves."
I feared then; but not now.

Salome replies that she would tear Mariamne's beauty with her nails, but Cypros would have her life, no less. She would send her to that democratic doom, the swelling grave.

They withdraw as Herod comes down the steps with Mariamne, telling her that he must match himself with Rome. Great difficulties, he declares, bring him delight.

Mariamne. And most of this I love you, and have loved,
That when you wooed, behind you cities crashed,
Those eyes that dimmed for me flamed in the breach,
And you were scorched and scarred and dressed in spoils,
Magnificent in livery of ruin.
You swept denial off and all delay,
You rushed on me like fire, and a wind drove you,
Thou who didst never fear, Herod, my Herod.
Now clasp me again as thou didst clasp me then,
When like a hundred lightning brands upsprung
In the night sudden. Then did you laugh out
And whirled me like a god through the dark away.

Now she would not have him stay, for if he did he would no longer be the Herod she adores. He asks her if nothing would chill her love for him, and she replies, "no," but hesitates, and says, unless—breaking off at that. He urges her to conceal nothing from him.

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Mar. Why speak of what shall never be?
Pull back my head, and look down in my eyes,
Herod, my Herod, such a love as grows
For you within me, it could never die.
Her. Ah!
Mar. And I take a kind of maiden pleasure
In hushing what I feel will be so wild,
In staying what I know shall be so swift;
This love could never fade.

Still he is not satisfied, and she says he might kill her love, murder it in a moment, but he would hear no cry from her. He starts at a sound from outside, and Mariamne, listening, hears wailing.

Her. Mariamne, say
That nothing ever shall divide us two.
Mar. Again! What hath been found?
Her. Ah; close to me
Mar. I cannot hear, I am all blind and dumb;
They are bringing what is found toward us, Herod.
Her. This cannot touch us.
Mar. And they bring it slowly
They wail not for the old, as these are wailing.
Steps now——
Her. A knocking. Ere they shall come in
Say, Mariamne, nothing shall divide us.
Mar. Let them come in.

Herod gives the word, and bearers enter with a litter on which lies a covered body. Wailing women walk before and after. Herod leads Mariamne away, but she tells them to disclose the face of the corpse. It is Aristobulus. She reels back with a cry, and Herod catches her in his arms, imploring her not to die. The queen recovers herself slowly and with effort.

She commands them to put the litter down and says she will sit by it, and then dismisses them. All leave her save Herod. He tells her that he will erect a magnificent tomb to Aristobulus. Sohemus re-enters, and the king commending the queen to him, says he is going into peril, and asks her to bid him farewell.

Mar. [*rising*]. I stand between the living and the dead.
[*Moving away.*]
Her. For the last time—your lips for the last time.

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Mar. Oh, take them, Herod, but——
Her. What have I done?
If she——
[*A trumpet.*]
Sohemus. Away, O king, the trumpet calls.
Her. My bugle from the hill shall say farewell.
Hither from that dead body. Hither. I grow
Even jealous of the dead. Hither! Ah, no;
Farewell, farewell—for Rhodes.
Herod rushes off. Mariamne remains by the litter. She turns and looks at Sohemus.
Soh. O queen, why are your eyes so fixed on me?
What is it I shall do? Shall I fetch litter
Bathsheba? Still your eyes between the candles
Burn through me. What then would you have me do?
[*Crosses at back to round R.*]
Mar. Come hither and stand near to me, Sohemus.
[Sohemus *comes to her side.*]
And he was a strong swimmer yet was drowned.
Soh. The entangling reeds.
Mar. Lay upon mine your hand.
Soh. O queen, I tremble at your touch.
Mar. This morn
The people cried out that he should be king.
Soh. It was a madness.
Mar. Look into my eyes.
Will you not? Kings have gazed in them.
Soh. O queen!
I am dazed; thy beauty takes away my life
And being.
Mar. Herod goes and leaves behind——
Soh. 'Tis very still.
Mar. You have been true to Herod?
Soh. O until death.
Mar. Yes, unto death. Sohemus,
Start not away.
Soh. O queen, I cannot stir.
I am held as in a dream.
Mar. Sohemus, stay.
Was not this dying fortunate for Herod?
Came it not just upon the time? O speak,
And fear not—kings must not be lightly blamed,

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No, nor king's instruments. Now, in your ear,
Was not this drowning fortunate for Herod?

Soh. Oh, kill me, but command me not to speak.

Mar. A necessary death then. Was it so?

Soh. What shall I say?

Mar. The truth. I know it now.
This child was murdered.

Soh. Murdered?

Mar. They came round
And held him under, and great bubbles rose.
Now by this beauty can you answer no?

Soh. I—I cannot.

Mar. Go.

He leaves her. She turns again to the litter. At this moment the faint sound of a bugle is heard far off, and in the distance torches are seen and Herod's retinue moving over a hill.

Mar. [*turns*]. Ah, Herod, Herod!

During the absence of Herod the turbulence of the people has grown more menacing. The daily visits of the queen to her brother's tomb work on the populace and the chief councillor declares to the captain of the guard that they must be stopped, at least when Herod returns from Rhodes, if he ever does return. But almost at this moment they observe the approach of a solitary horseman, riding furiously, whom they recognize as the king.

Mariamne enters the hall of audience. In a word she lets fall to Sohemus she reveals her knowledge of Herod's parting command that should he be overtaken by death she too must die. Sohemus, startled, replies that her beauty has made him betray his master's secrets, a thing no torture could have done. Mariamne declares that the murder of Aristobulus has made Herod vile.

Herod is heard shouting without, calling upon Mariamne. He rushes into the hall, makes his way to the queen and kisses her hand. The councillors demand the news, and he pours it out to Mariamne, how he pursued Cæsar, and coming upon him offered him the same aid that he had given to Antony. He grasps Mariamne's hand and asks her if she is listening; tells her that Octavius drank to his "friend Herod and to his Mariamne."

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Mar. [*groaning*]. Ah!

On the groan he falls away from her, then looks in her face. With a gesture he dismisses the Court, who disperse, whispering. Herod and Mariamne are left alone. He moves to embrace her with passion, but she repels him.

Mar. I am come
From young Aristobulus that was murdered.
Her. Murdered!
Mar. Or taken as we take a dog
And strangled in that pool whose reeds I hear
Sighing within my ears until I die.
You like a tiger purred about me: Oh!
Your part it was to soothe and hush me while
He gasped beneath their hands—your hands—O yes,
You were not near, 'twas yours to kiss and lie—
But none the less your hands were round his throat,
O liar!
Her. Mariamne!
Mar. You forest beast!
Her. Mariamne!
Mar. Back, and in the jungle burn
Whence you did leap out at my brother's throat.
Can you deny your part in this? O subtle!
Half suitor and half strangler, with one arm
About the sister's neck, the other hand
About the brother's throat!
Her. I'll not endure——
Mar. Can you deny you slew Aristobulus?
Look in my eyes; speak truth if still 'tis in you.
Her. I'll not deny my part in the boy's death.
Mar. Will you weep now? Strive, and the tears will come.
Her. 'Twas I—I, Herod—who commanded it.

Mariamne is stunned at this reply, that an upstart had dipped his hands in their ancient blood. It was not for himself, but for Judæa that he struck, Herod says, and for her throne. She returns that he is an assassin first, and now an orator, but she is listless to all concerning him. Herod utters a groan of despair. She says because she once loved him so, and because that love would have grown much greater, she now speaks and tells him that even the pang of her brother's murder pales beside the

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loss of this love, this drying up within of her soul; he has stopped her life, ended her being in a moment.

Herod embraces her fiercely and declares he will break down the barrier she raises between them, as he has broken down all others. She shall forget Aristobulus, who is dead, while he still lives and glows and burns for her. The passion which once could sway her now almost moves her to laughter. He declares that he will go mad, and raves for a single kiss, a touch, a word. She coolly says farewell. She will move about the palace she says. She is still a queen, but she will not be alone with him.

Her. Where's now the boast, the glory, O where now?
What was this triumph but in the telling of it
To you! And what this victory but to pour it
Into your ears! I had imagined all
Meetings but this—this only I foresaw not;
Here I disband my legions. Arise,
And spill the wine of glory on the ground;
I turn my face into the night. And yet
Why am I bowed thus—I that am Herod? Come,
I'll take you in my arms. I'll have your lips
By force, and chain your body up to me;
I am denied your soul, but I will slake
This thirst of the flesh, and drink your beauty deep!

Mar. [*repulsing him*]. I'll not endure your touch! Your hands are curved
From that fell throttle. Now stretch out your arms;
What is between us? It is more than air.
[*Wildly.*] I tell you, Herod, that your arm but then
Passed through the dead boy that now stands between us.

[*Passes up steps with a long, shuddering cry of horror.*]

Her. Mariamne, leave me not thus, Mariamne!

[*Exit* MARIAMNE.

Aristobulus, art thou satisfied?

Gadias has a greater matter to lay before the king, and haltingly tells him that in his absence the queen has continually visited the tomb of young Aristobulus, thus causing public peril, for the people assembled to see her pass and uttered sullen threats. The Pharisees are fanning the flame. He declares the visits to the tomb must be forbidden. Cypros and Salome enter.

Herod scarcely seems to be listening to Gadias, and asks

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him to speak of Mariamne, and how to win her back. His mother and sister come to him. He tells them of how Mariamne has taken the murder of Aristobulus. His mother asks him insinuatingly if the death of Aristobulus is the sole reason for the queen's behavior, and declares that he does not know women. She asks him to whom he confided the murder, if it was to all the court. He says it was only to Sohemus. Salome repeats the name significantly. He ascends the staircase and turning, looks from Cypros to Salome with a gesture of disbelief.

Cypros says now is the moment, when Herod is in this mood, to make use of him to strike at Mariamne. Before his anger cools they will tell him the queen has poisoned his wine. Then he will make her drain the goblet, and the draft having already been poisoned by them their object will be attained.

This is the hour at which the queen is accustomed to prepare a draft for the king, and presently a cup-bearer enters with the drink. Cypros stops him and, as he bows before her, drops poison in the cup. She smells of the wine and asks Salome if it has not a strange odor. Salome finds that it has, most strange. Cypros tells the cup-bearer to warn the king, and sends him into the royal apartments. The poison which Cypros has put in the wine is most deadly, and if the queen drinks of it her death will be almost instantaneous.

There is an angry cry from Herod within. He enters in grim silence with the cup-bearer and orders an attendant to summon the queen and his councillors. When Mariamne enters she stands with her back to the door at the top of the steps. Herod asks her if she prepared the cup with her own hands, and why she did not bring it to him herself according to her custom. She prepared the cup, she returns, but chose to send it to him. He tells her that his mother and sister drew a strange odor from the wine. Taking the cup as he offers it to her, she inquires if this is a second treachery. She looks toward Cypros and Salome and then back to Herod, and says that he who could drown can poison.

Her. Drink it—or——

Mar. I am so weary, I will drink it, and
If it is mortal, then I go at once

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Down to Aristobulus.

Now farewell!
Jerusalem, city of God, farewell,
My cradle first, my home, and now my grave,
For I, the last of all the Maccabees,
I, the lone daughter of that flaming line,
I perish without fear and without cry.
For a doom is come upon us, and an ending.
Brother, I drink and hasten down to you.

As she puts the cup to her lips, Herod dashes it down and exclaims that he cannot see her drink it, though she prepared it for his death. They are interrupted by a great clamor, and learn that the populace are attacking the palace and have beaten down the outer gate. Sohemus has been wounded, fighting at the head of the guards. Herod gives orders to call reserves from the citadel and have them steal in and surround the mob. While he is speaking the guards are forced back into the hall. Herod takes his stand upon the stairs, and his voice is heard above the tumult. He calls upon the leaders of the mob to stand out and answer him. Several come forward. They say they will avenge Aristobulus, and ask him if he can deny he struck him down.

Her. I struck him down! And did he live again,
Again I'd strike him down. And any other
That's in my path I'll set my foot upon.
[*A murmur which swells into a roar.*]
Why, why, then? Because Herod is Judæa;
I am your bulwark and your bastion; I,
Herod alone.

They accuse him of having sold them to the Romans. He enumerates the concessions he has gained from Rome. Henceforth Jews shall enjoy the freedom of every city under Roman rule; they shall be at liberty to worship the God of Israel, and the heavy hand of persecution shall be held off. All these benefits shall endure while he and his heirs reign. Murmurs of satisfaction have been growing louder and louder, and at last the general gratitude is expressed by applause. Furthermore, Herod tells them, he will build a new and vaster temple, and will set a thousand priests to work to prepare metal for it.

Finally, Herod comes down among the people and offers

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his breast to any who wish to strike. Who strikes at his breast, he tells them, strikes at a city. Who stabs at his heart stabs at a kingdom. His body is their country. There is no opposition to him. A trumpet sounds, and armed men appear at the back, filling the corridors and colonnade. The mob are cowed and fawn on the king. He has but to give the order and all will perish, but he bids them go, with advice to the politicians and priests. Before dispersing they kneel, and some of those nearest kiss his garments.

Cypros comes to Herod. She tells him it is now a question of Mariamne's life, or hers and Salome. She charges that the queen has denied him her love, and has prepared poison for him. Gadias interjects that the throne is shaken. Pheroras adds that for the country she must die. Cypros and Salome chant "Kill her, Herod. Kill her! Kill her!"

Her. Would you commit such beauty to the earth?
Those eyes that bring upon us endless thoughts!
That face that seems as it had come to pass
Like a thing prophesied! To kill her!
And I, if she were dead, I too would die,
Or linger in the sunlight without life;
Oh, terrible to live but in remembering!
To call her name down the long corridors;
To come on jewels that she wore, laid by;
Or open suddenly some chest, and see
Some favorite robe she wore on such a day!
I dare not bring upon myself such woe.

Gad. 'Tis not yourself, O king, it is the State.

Pher. It is our country that asks this of you.

Her. If it must be, then, here I sit in judgment!
[*Moves to throne and sits.*]
I call upon you, Mariamne, here
To answer for yourself that you deny.

Herod calls upon Mariamne to answer the charges that she denies him all rights of marriage, prepared poison for him, and stirred up the insurrection. Gadias says the riot was caused by her visits to the tomb. Mariamne answers that she will not forbear to visit the tomb though all Jerusalem should go mad and pull the palace down upon their heads. Herod reminds her that he has power of life and

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death over her, and that she has incurred the pains of death as a traitor not only to him, but to the State as well. Mariamne replies that she is ready. Cypros and Gadias cry out to Herod to let her die. Herod tells them all to leave him a moment but Mariamne. She comes before him.

Mar. Herod, I cannot change—my love is dead.

Her. Die then yourself—die, die upon the instant.
Such beauty should pass suddenly away,
Such loveliness should vanish like the lightning,
Die—die——
But ere you go, witness at least
That never woman was so loved as thou,
That never man from the beginning loved
As I.

Mar. [*moves down to him*]. And yet you left behind direction
That were you slain, that moment I should die.

Her. Here has imagination made me cruel,
So that one death should end what is one life,
And we two simultaneously cease:
If cease we do, let's perish the same instant.
Never could I decay while you still breathed,
Nor could I rot while you moved in the light;
What grave could hold me fast? What sepulchre
Could so press on me that I would not rend it?
Burn me in fire, and see me ashes, yet
No lighted fire hath force upon this fire:
Or did I live again, then should I float
All inarticulate and invisible
About you still—mad to recover words—
A glow hath now become a wasting flame.
I am a barren, solitary pyre!

[*Takes ashes from brazier and strews them over his head.*]

Enter PHERORAS, GADIAS, CYPROS, *and* SALOME.

Pheroras. I will give order for the execution.

Cyp. Let her drink poison—die by that same death
Prepared for you.

[PHERORAS *is about to go up steps.*]

Her. Pheroras, and you others,
I'll not excuse her, but she had at least
Some provocation in that fierce command

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I left behind that should I die, she too
Should perish.

[SALOME *exchanges look with* CYPROS.]

Sal. And to whom did you confide
So intimate, so secret a command?
Not to Gadias?

It was to Sohemus. At the moment Sohemus is brought into the hall. He gasps, "Forgive me, Herod," and dies. He was the friend of Herod, Cypros says, and yet it was from him that Mariamne learned of Aristobulus's murder. It was wrung from him, Salome adds, not by torture, but perhaps by loveliness more terrible than torture, slow sweetness with more exquisite a pang. He was so true, Cypros reiterates, no tortures could have shaken him. There was only one way, persists Salome, in which she drew this from him.

Cyp. Know, son, that woman most delicate,
And most high-born, feed often on strange fancies;
They are so screened, they come to long for peril,
And we are secret, Herod—very secret.

Sal. Thus only, Herod, lying on his breast,
And gazing in his eyes, one arm about him,
Could she have drawn him, swooning at her sweetness,
To such betrayal.

Her. Like a fiend you hold me
In an eternal torture.

Sal. Till he gave
His soul up in the incense of her hair.

Her. [*throwing* SALOME *from him*]. Devil!

Cyp. And, Herod, not for the first time
She hath languished for a soldier lowly born.

Herod remembers the dying cry of Sohemus for forgiveness. He rushes to the soldier's body and calls upon him frantically to speak. Then he gives the command to kill the queen. Gadias dispatches a servant quickly before Herod can recant.

Her. I have said it! And it was foretold of me
That I should slay the thing that most I loved.
Fate is upon me with the hour, the word.
A dreadful numbness all my spirit seals.
Yet will I not be bound, I will break free,
She shall not die—she shall not die—she shall not——

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Trumpets sound, and a Roman envoy is ushered into the hall with his suite. The envoy announces to Herod that Octavius has added a number of states to the territory under Herod's dominion. Herod calls out for Mariamne to tell her the news. At the same moment, an attendant announces to Gadias that the queen is dead.

Her. Mariamne, hear you this? Mariamne, see you?
[*Repeating the words and going up steps.*]
Hippo, Samaria and Gadara,
And high-walled Joppa, and Anthedon [*as he moves up*]
And Gaza unto these, and Straton's towers!

The chief captains, councillors, and priests, have assembled in the hall of audience at sunset. Gadias rises to speak with uplifted hand. There is a sudden silence. He tells them that Herod has been brooding by the Dead Sea, incapable of attending to the affairs of state, but to-day has returned. He reminds him that Herod is their protection against Rome. The king's physician declares that one thing alone has saved Herod from insanity, and that is Herod's love; he dares not imagine that the queen is dead. Once he learns that Mariamne is dead, madness will come upon him. Therefore they must conspire to keep the truth from him.

The physician says the king must be distracted with plans for the temple, and with music and dancers. If he sends a message to the dead, the message must be carried. If he asks an answer from the dead, answer must be given. If in this way the king can be brought through the first crisis of his malady there is hope that in time he will submit to the fact of Mariamne's death.

Salome enters and addresses the court. If there are any that envied or that hated Herod, she says, his face will make them forget their wrongs. She has been close to him by day and night, and tells them of his pitiful ravings. And now she so regrets the death of Mariamne that she would accept any humiliation gladly if the queen could be brought back to Herod. He is really returning to see her face, rather than to take up rule as he imagines. She warns them not to let him rush in where the body is.

The cry that the king is coming is heard outside, and then is taken up in the palace. Herod enters, unkempt and

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in ragged apparel. He slowly ascends the throne and says that business may be brought before him. Gadias tells him that pestilence has fallen upon the land, and then famine, and that the realm is filled with bones. What shall they do? Herod replies to import grain from Egypt, and that he will feed 50,000 subjects out of his own purse. The councillors remark that the king's mind is clear.

The chief builder reports to the king that the work on the new temple has been interrupted. Herod talks of his plans for building a new city. Once or twice he passes his hand over his brow. Finally, coming to a stop, he commands them suddenly to tell the queen that he would speak to her. There is a general movement. The king asks if she does not know that he has returned. If she is sleeping he does not wish her to be roused. An attendant goes out.

Again Herod turns to the court and continues with his plans. Presently he dismisses the architect and asks once more for the queen. For a moment he is diverted, but soon sees the attendant who had gone to the queen's apartments and asks if she is asleep. Gadias, after speaking to the attendant, informs him that the queen has indeed fallen into a deep sleep. Herod replies not to rouse her. Then he asks if she did not stir.

The attendant assures him the queen stirred not once. Herod inquires if there was no movement of the breathing. The attendant hesitates and others try to interpose, but the king once again demands to know whether the queen's bosom stirred. He then tells the court of a dream that he had the night before in which he saw the new temple completed. After some further talk he sits listlessly, his hands hanging down, looking toward the door of the royal apartments.

Her. Let one of you go forth
And rouse the queen—not roughly be it done—
But rouse her! I would have her waked from sleep.
[*A general embarrassment.*]
Why linger you? Is it not easy? Go you,
Bathsheba, child, and touch her gently—thus.
There is no haste for her to come—I am
Not over-eager, and will wait—but rouse her!
Rouse her—or—go!

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Bathsheba leaves the hall in lingering terror. Herod again turns to the court.

Her. Now, sirs, unceasingly
Let all the sounds of building rise to me
By day, by night—and now let anvils clang,
Melodious axes ring through Lebanon,
Masons let me behold so far aloft
They crawl like flies, ant-like artificers,
Swarming with tiny loads, and laborers
Hither and thither murmuring like bees.
Away with inspiration of these words!
[*Exeunt chief artificers.*

Herod demands Bathsheba, the queen's maid. It is an easy task to wake a sleeping woman, he complains. That is all he asks. He will not compel her to come. He wishes to know that she has waked. Gadias tells him the queen has waked. Does she know that he has returned, Herod pursues. Bathsheba answers stammeringly. Herod says he understands; the queen knows that he has returned—did she say anything?

Again Bathsheba stammers. Herod remarks it is no matter, and Salome, distracted, commands that musicians be brought. Herod cannot conceal his impatience while the playing is going on, but glances continually toward the queen's apartments, rises and sits again. He commands Bathsheba to go once more and tell the queen to come to him. There is a general stir and murmur of apprehension.

Her. Say to her I have been patient,
I have been very patient. [*Moves down.*] Ask of her,
That for the sake of that one night when I—[*taking* BATHSHEBA *by the arm*]—
Catching her thus, burst thro' the robber swords,
And she feared not, but looked up in my eyes,
That she will come to me when she hath robed.
[*Beating his hands gently together.*]
But oh, oh, she must come!

The physician attempts to draw the attention of the king to a minstrel singing with the dulcimer. The king will not be put off. He rises slowly and says he has a fear. They assure him the queen is coming. The king asks what if she would and cannot. He declares they are all deceived by the sense of their eyes and ears, which make them deaf

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and blind; otherwise they should be aware of all their dead about them. Again he says he has a fear, and rises wildly.

Physician. O king!

[*Enter at a sign from* PHYSICIAN *a troupe of dancing girls who perform a slow, elaborate dance; but at its height, and when the movements are growing furious, suddenly the king is seen in the midst, unkempt, ragged, and scattering the dancers.*]

Her. Mariamne!

Gad. [*to* PHYSICIAN]. Now, what's best? Quickly devise.

Her. Mariamne! Mariamne!

A Councillor [*to* PHYSICIAN]. Now Judæa
Hangs on thy wit.

Phys. Myself am crazed almost.

Her. Mariamne, Mariamne, Mariamne,
Come, come!

He rushes up the gallery to the door, at which he casts himself, sinking exhausted on steps. Amid the consternation, Bathsheba goes up, and taking his hand, leads him gently down like a child until he again sits on the throne.

Cyp. [*placing her hands on his shoulders*]. My child,
I bore thee 'neath a wild moon by the sea.

[HEROD *puts* CYPROS'S *hands gently away.*]

Gad. O Herod, thou art royal, rise and reign.

Her. [*recovering himself.*] I had forgotten. I am still a king!
Bring me my crown, and set it on my head.

[GADIAS *puts his crown on his head.*]

Gad. All hail! all hail! Herod, king of the Jews!

[*Court repeat the cries.*]

Her. Bring forth the purple robe and vest me in it.

Herod commands them to summon the queen on the instant. He asks them if he is not that Herod who burned up cities while he was yet beardless, that fired the robbers out of Galilee, routed the Parthians, blew the Arabians away like a blast, and bound great Antony to him. The court thrice acclaim Herod, and he continues the harangue. He asks if it was not he who brought the wealth of the world into their ports. Again the courtiers shout his name.

Her. Then on the instant let the queen be brought.

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I'll see her with my eyes in flesh and blood;
Oh, nothing yet hath stopped me: to my will
No limit hath been set. Summon the queen,
Or I will call not earthly vengeance down.
I have exhausted earth, I'll fetch the lightning
And call on thunder like an emperor! [*Moves down.*]
And henceforth I discard Augustus's aid;
I'll bribe Jehovah as my new ally,
Flatter the Holy One to be my friend——
I'll—I'll—I'll——

[*Falls back into* PHYSICIAN'S *arms.*]

If you would avert a doom
Unheard, unthinkable—summon the queen!

Phys. There is no other way.

Gad. [*to attendant*]. You then go forth
And bring the queen with ceremony in.

The attendants go out. Herod says if there has been mischance to Mariamne he will re-create her out of endless yearning, and with arms extended throws himself on the throne. He buries his head in anguish. Steps are heard and the embalmed queen is carried in and laid at the foot of the throne. There is a pause of pained expectancy. Herod slowly raises his face and descends. He touches her on the forehead and stands suddenly rigid with a fixed and vacant stare.

The physician announces to the awed court that Herod is stricken with catalepsy. At that instant is heard the blare of trumpets, and envoys from Cæsar are ushered into the hall of audience. The first envoy reports that Cæsar has conferred on Herod and his heirs the kingdom of Arabia and sends him a sceptēr inlaid with precious stones. Herod remains motionless.

Gad. The king is stricken, and can stir not, sirs.

First E. O thou Judæa! O thou frozen land!

Second E. O thou mute East!

Third E. Motionless Orient!

The Court. All hail, O hail, Herod! Herod, all hail!

Sal. [*to* PHYSICIAN]. O lives there any hope for him at last?

Phys. Rest, and a world of leaves, and stealing stream
Or solemn swoon of music may allure
Homeward the ranging spirit of the king.

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These things avail: but these things are of man.
To me indeed it seems, who with dim eyes
Behold this Herod motionless and mute,
To me it seems that they who grasp the world,
The kingdom and the power and the glory,
Must pay with deepest misery of spirit,
Atoning unto God for a brief brightness,
And ever ransom, like this rigid king,
The outward victory with inward loss.

Ch. Priest. Now unto Him who brought His people forth
Out of the wilderness, by day a cloud,
By night a pillar of fire; to Him alone,
Look we at last and to no other look we.

Slowly and silently the whole Court melt away, one or two coming and looking on the king, then departing. Herod is left alone by the litter, standing motionless. The curtain descends: then rises, and it is night, with a few stars. It descends, and again rises, and now it is the glimmer of dawn which falls upon Herod and Mariamne, he still standing rigid and with fixed stare in the cataleptic trance.

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YOU NEVER CAN TELL*

By Bernard Shaw

First played in London at the Court Theatre on May 2, 1900.

Argument: Mr. Valentine, a young dentist who has his way to make, hesitates to take lunch with the family of his first patient, a young lady, inasmuch as she cannot tell him who her father was, but finally accepts the invitation for himself and his landlord, a well-to-do but somewhat crabbed elderly gentleman who is living apart from his wife and children and can scarcely bear to hear them mentioned. Upon meeting the young lady's mother and recognizing her as his wife, the landlord declares that he is the victim of a conspiracy which nullifies the deed of separation, and demands the custody of the children. Will a reconciliation be brought about, and will Mr. Valentine win the beautiful but cold and distant daughter?

Mr. Valentine's dental operating room is the best room of a furnished lodging in a terrace on the sea at a fashionable watering place. The decorations and furniture combine to suggest early Victorian commercial respectability, belief in money, Bible fetichism, fear of hell always at war with fear of poverty, instinctive horror at the passionate character of art, love, and Roman Catholic religion, and all the first fruits of plutocracy in the early generations of the industrial revolution.

There is no shadow of this on the two persons who are occupying the room just now. One of them, Miss Dorothy Clandon, a very pretty woman in miniature, her tiny figure dressed with the daintiest gaiety, is of a later generation, being hardly eighteen yet. Mr. Valentine, the dentist, contemplating her with the self-satisfaction of a

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successful operator, is a young man of [illegible] or thereabouts. He does not give the impression of being much of a workman.

The tooth out, the young lady asks the Mr. Valentine so many questions in rapid succession that when her brother, Phil, calls for her she is able to inform him that the new dentist has only been in the place six weeks, and that he is a bachelor. The house isn't his; and the furniture is the landlord's; and the professional plant is hired. He got her tooth out beautifully at the first go, and they are great friends.

Before Mr. Valentine can accept an invitation to lunch, which she extends, he asks whom he has the pleasure of entertaining. Dorothy says her mother is Mrs. Lanfrey Clandon, an authoress of great repute—in Madeira, where they come from. No household is complete without her works, the Twentieth Century Treatises, on creeds, cooking, clothing, conduct, children, parents, and other subjects. Mr. Valentine points out that one thing they must have before any one can afford to be seen going around with them, and that is a father, alive or dead.

Mr. Valentine sums up his position. He spent his last sovereign moving into his quarters. He hasn't paid a shilling of rent yet. He is eating and drinking on credit. The fee that he has just received from Miss Clandon is all that he has earned. If he swerves a hair's breadth from the straight line of the most rigid respectability he is done for. Under such circumstances is it fair to ask him to lunch with them when they don't know their own father?

The fact that they have a grandfather who is a canon of Lincoln Cathedral removes the obstacle. Mr. Valentine goes at once to change his coat. Dolly and Phil decide that their mother must tell them who their father was. A moment later they have their opportunity to ask, for their mother comes in with Gloria, their sister. Mrs. Clandon is between forty and fifty, with a slight tendency to soft, sedentary fat, and a fair remainder of good looks. She belongs to the forefront of her own period (say, 1880-90) in a jealously assertive attitude of character and intellect, and in being a woman of cultivated interests rather than passionately developed personal affections. She feels

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strongly about social questions and principles, not about persons.

Gloria, who is hardly past twenty, is a much more formidable person than her mother. She is the incarnation of haughty high-mindedness, raging with the impatience of an impetuous, dominative character paralyzed by the impotence of her youth. The conflict of her passion with her obstinate pride and intense fastidiousness results in a freezing coldness of manner. When Valentine returns to the room Gloria studies him with freezing attention. He falls in love at first sight and is miserably confused.

A moment later Valentine is called away again and Dolly and Phil at once improve the occasion by telling their mother they feel that she might take them a little more into her confidence. Mrs. Clandon scents mischief and begins to spar for wind. She reminds them that there are two kinds of family life. One kind is based on recognition of the right of every member of the household to independence and privacy. The other sort is a life in which husbands open wives' letters and call on them to account for every moment of their time, and in which women do the same to their children.

Philip. I think it due to ourselves to say that the question we wanted to ask is as much our business as yours.

Dolly. Besides, it can't be good to keep a lot of questions bottled up inside you. You did it, mamma; but see how awfully it's broken out again in me.

Mrs. Clandon. I see you want to ask your question. Ask it.

Dolly and Philip [*beginning simultaneously*]. Who——

[*They stop.*]

Phil. Now look here, Dolly: am I going to conduct this business or are you?

Dolly. You.

Phil. Then hold your mouth. [DOLLY *does so literally.*] The question is a simple one. When the ivory snatcher——

Mrs. C. [*remonstrating*]. Phil!

Phil. Dentist is an ugly word. The man of ivory and gold asked us whether we were the children of Mr. Densmore Clandon of Newbury Hall. In pursuance of the precepts in your treatise on Twentieth Century Conduct, and your repeated personal exhortations to us to curtail

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the number of unnecessary lies we tell, we replied truthfully that we didn't know.

Dolly. Neither did we.

Phil. Sh! The result was that the gum architect made considerable difficulties about accepting our invitation to lunch, although I doubt if he has had anything but tea and bread and butter for a fortnight past. Now my knowledge of human nature leads me to believe that we had a father, and that you probably know who he was.

Mrs. C. [*her agitation returning*]. Stop, Phil. Your father is nothing to you, nor to me. [*Vehemently.*] That is enough.

The twins are silenced, but not satisfied. They are surprised by Gloria who suddenly interposes, declaring that they have a right to know. The twins at once go over to their mother's side. Gloria says that she has had an experience like that of Dolly and Phil. On board the steamer the first officer did her the honor to propose to her.

Dolly. No, it was to me.

Mrs. C. The first officer! Are you serious, Gloria? What did you say to him? [*Correcting herself*]. Excuse me: I have no right to ask that.

Gloria. The answer is pretty obvious. A woman who does not know who her father was cannot accept such an offer.

Mrs. C. Surely you did not want to accept it?

Glor. [*turning a little and raising her voice*]. No; but suppose I had wanted to!

Phil. Did that difficulty strike you, Dolly?

Dolly. No, I accepted him.

Glor., *Mrs C.*, *Phil.* (*all crying out together*) Accepted him! Dolly! Oh, I say!

Dolly [*naïvely*]. He did look such a fool!

Mrs. C. But why did you do such a thing, Dolly?

Dolly. For fun, I suppose. He had to measure my finger for a ring. You'd have done the same thing yourself.

Mrs. C. No, Dolly, I would not. As a matter of fact, the first officer did propose to me; and I told him to keep that sort of thing for women who were young enough to be amused by it. He appears to have acted on my advice.

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[*She rises and goes to the hearth.*] Gloria, I am sorry you think me weak; but I cannot tell you what you want. You are all too young.

Phil. This is rather a startling departure from Twentieth Century principles.

Dolly [*quoting*]. "Answer all your children's questions, and answer them truthfully, as soon as they are old enough to ask them." See Twentieth Century Motherhood——

Phil. Page one——

Dolly. Chapter one——

Phil. Sentence one.

Mrs. C. My dears, I did not say that you were too young to know. I said you were too young to be taken into my confidence.

Some experiences are not to be spoken of except to others who have suffered equally, she says. She hopes her children will never be qualified for such confidences. Mrs. Clandon does go so far, however, as to say that if Gloria remembered her father her last recollection of him would be that he struck her purposely, deliberately, with the intention of hurting her, with a whip bought for the purpose. She has kept him out of Gloria's life, and asks Gloria to do as much for her by never mentioning him again.

Valentine comes in and reports that his landlord has broken a tooth on a Brazil nut and wants him to look at it and lunch with him afterward. Dolly tells him to pull the tooth out and then bring the landlord along to lunch at their hotel with them. Mrs. Clandon leaves before the landlord, Mr. Crampton, enters, but the children wait to look him over and ask him his age and a few other questions before leaving him in Valentine's hands.

Mr. Fergus Crampton is a man of about sixty, tall, hard, and stringy, with an atrociously obstinate, ill-tempered, grasping mouth, and a querulously dogmatic voice. His capacity for suffering acutely from all the dislike that his temper and obstinacy can bring upon him is proved by his wistful, wounded eyes, by a plaintive note in his voice, and a painful want of confidence in his welcome. Valentine finds that he has a splendid set of teeth and reproves him for cracking nuts with them.

Crampton. I've always cracked nuts with them what else are they for? [*Dogmatically.*] The proper way to

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keep teeth good is to give them plenty of use on bones and nuts, and wash them every day with soap—plain yellow soap.

Valentine. Soap! Why soap?

Cramp. I began using it as a boy because I was made to; and I've used it ever since. And I never had tooth-ache in my life.

Val. Don't you find it rather nasty?

Cramp. I found that most things that were good for me were nasty. But I was taught to put up with them, and made to put up with them. I'm used to it now: in fact, I like the taste when the soap is really good.

Val. [*making a wry face in spite of himself*]. You seem to have been very carefully educated, Mr. Crampton.

Cramp. [*grimly*]. I wasn't spoiled, at all events.

Val. [*smiling a little to himself*]. Are you quite sure?

Cramp. What d'y' mean?

Val. Well, your teeth are good, I admit. But I've seen just as good in very self-indulgent mouths. [*He goes to the ledge of cabinet and changes the probe for another one.*]

Cramp. It's not the effect on the teeth: it's the effect on the character.

Val. [*placably*]. Oh, the character, I see. [*He recommences operations.*] A little wider, please. Hm! That one will have to come out: it's past saving. [*He withdraws the probe and again comes to the side of the chair to converse.*] Don't be alarmed: you shan't feel anything. I'll give you gas.

Cramp. Rubbish, man: I want none of your gas. Out with it. People were taught to bear necessary pain in my day.

Val. Oh, if you like being hurt, all right. I'll hurt you as much as you like without any extra charge for the beneficial effect on your character.

Cramp. [*rising and glaring at him*]. Young man: you owe me six weeks' rent.

Val. I do.

Cramp. Can you pay me?

Val. No.

Cramp. [*satisfied with his advantage*]. I thought not! How soon d'y' think you'll be able to pay me if you have

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no better manners than to make game of your patients? [*He sits down again.*]

Val. My good sir, my patients haven't all formed their characters on kitchen soap.

Cramp. [*suddenly gripping him by the arm as he turns away again to the cabinet*]. So much the worse for them. I tell you you don't understand my character. If I could spare all my teeth, I'd make you pull them out one after another to show you what a properly hardened man can go through with when he's made up his mind to it. [*He nods at him to enforce the effect of this declaration, and releases him.*]

Val. [*his careless pleasantry quite unruffled*]. And you want to be more hardened, do you?

Cramp. Yes.

Val. [*strolling away to the bell*]. Well, you're quite hard enough for me already—as a landlord. [CRAMPTON *receives this with a growl of grim humor.* VALENTINE *rings the bell, and remarks in a cheerful, casual way, whilst waiting for it to be answered.*] Why did you never get married, Mr. Crampton? A wife and children would have taken some of the hardness out of you.

Mr. Crampton asks with some ferocity what that is to Valentine. Later he admits that he is not a bachelor. There is a Mrs. Crampton. He curses her. There were three children, too. He curses them all. Valentine asks what he will bet that the tooth won't come out without his feeling it. Crampton bets the six weeks' rent that Valentine owes him.

"Done!" cries Valentine, clapping the mouthpiece of the gas machine over the patient's mouth and nose and at the same time leaning over him from behind so as to hold his head and shoulders down. Crampton makes an inarticulate sound in the mouthpiece and tries to lay hands on Valentine, whom he supposes to be in front of him. After a moment his arms waive aimlessly, then subside and drop. He is quite insensible. With a cry of triumph, Valentine proceeds with his task.

The terrace at the Marine Hotel, with a square flagged platform and a parapet of heavy pilasters supporting a broad stone coping, stands up over the sea like a cliff. At

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one corner of the terrace is a flight of steps leading down to the beach. A middle-aged gentleman is sitting at a little iron table, reading the *Standard*. The corners of his mouth are turned down purposely as if he suspected them of wanting to turn up. He has large, expansive ears, cod-colored eyes, and a brow kept resolutely wide open, as if in youth he had resolved to be truthful, magnanimous, and incorruptible, but had never succeeded in making that habit of mind automatic and unconscious.

The head waiter of the establishment is busy laying napkins on a luncheon table with his back to the sea. He is a remarkable person in his way. A silly old man, white-haired and delicate looking, but so cheerful and contented that in his encouraging presence ambition stands rebuked as vulgarity, and imagination as treason to the abounding sufficiency and interest of the actual. He has a certain expression peculiar to men who have been extraordinarily successful in their callings, and who, whilst aware of the vanity of success, are untouched by envy.

Mrs. Clandon comes up the steps presently and passes the visitor without any sign of recognition. He inquires if she does not know him. Looking at him hard, she asks incredulously if he is Finch McComas. It is many years since she has seen him, and he no longer wears a sombrero and beard. He is her solicitor, and she has asked him to come down from London expressly to explain everything to the children. She is interrupted by the appearance of the twins and Gloria. Dolly wins a race up the steps with Phil because he attempts to combine unhurried propriety of bearing with terrific speed. They find the news very exciting. Dolly asks at once how old their father is. McComas says he is fifty-seven.

Dolly [*with a bound, startled and excited*]. Fifty-seven! Where does he live?

Mrs. C. [*remonstrating*]. Dolly, Dolly!

McComas [*stopping her*]. Let me answer that, Mrs. Clandon. The answer will surprise you considerably. He lives in this town. [MRS. CLANDON *rises. She and* GLORIA *look at one another in the greatest consternation.*]

Dolly [*with conviction*]. I knew it! Phil: Chalkstones is our father.

McC. Chalkstones!

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Dolly. Oh, Crampstones, or whatever it is. He said I was like his mother. I knew he must mean his daughter.

Phil. [*very seriously*]. Mr. McComas, I desire to consider your feelings in every possible way: but I warn you that if you stretch the long arm of coincidence to the length of telling me that Mr. Crampton of this town is my father, I shall decline to entertain the information for a moment.

McC. And pray why?

Phil. Because I have seen the gentleman; and he is entirely unfit to be my father, or Dolly's father, or Gloria's father, or my mother's husband.

McC. Oh, indeed! Well, sir, let me tell you that whether you like it or not, he is your father, and your sisters' father, and Mrs. Clandon's husband. Now! What have you to say to that?

Dolly [*whimpering*]. You needn't be so cross. Crampton isn't your father.

Phil. Mr. McComas, your conduct is heartless. Here you find a family enjoying the unspeakable peace and freedom of being orphans. We have never seen the face of a relative—never known a claim except the claim of freely chosen friendship. And now you wish to thrust into the most intimate relationship with us a man whom we don't know——

Dolly [*vehemently*]. An awful old man! [*Reproachfully.*] And you began as if you had quite a nice father for us.

McC. [*angrily*]. How do you know that he is not nice? And what right have you to choose your own father? [*Raising his voice.*] Let me tell you, Miss Clandon, that you are too young to——

Dolly [*interrupting him suddenly and eagerly*]. Stop! I forgot! Has he any money?

McC. He has a great deal of money.

Dolly [*delighted*]. Oh, what did I always say, Phil?

Phil. Dolly, we have perhaps been condemning the old man too hastily. Proceed, Mr. McComas.

Mr. McComas declares that he is too much hurt and shocked to proceed, but Mrs. Clandon informs him that a dreadful situation is imminent, the children having invited "that man" to lunch. Who is to tell him that they are

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his family? Philip has an idea; this communication should be made by a man of infinite tact.

McC. It will require tact, certainly.

Phil. Good! Dolly, whose tact were you noticing only this morning?

Dolly [*seizing the idea with rapture*]. Oh, yes, I declare! William!

Phil. The very man! [*Calling.*] William!

Waiter. Coming, sir.

McC. [*horrified*]. The waiter! Stop, stop! I will not permit this. I——

Waiter [*presenting himself between* PHILIP *and* MCCOMAS]. Yes, sir. [MCCOMAS'S *complexion fades into stone gray; and all movement and expression desert his eyes. He sits down stupefied.*]

Phil. William, you remember my request to you to regard me as your son?

Waiter [*with respectful indulgence*]. Yes, sir. Anything you please, sir

Phil. William, at the very outset of your career as my father, a rival has appeared on the scene.

Waiter. Your real father, sir? Well, that was to be expected, sooner or later, sir, wasn't it? [*Turning with a happy smile to* MCCOMAS.] Is it you, sir?

McC. [*renerved by indignation*]. Certainly not. My children know how to behave themselves.

Phil. No, William: this gentleman was very nearly my father: he wooed my mother, but wooed her in vain.

McC. [*outraged*]. Well, of all the——

Phil. Sh! Consequently, he is only our solicitor. Do you know one Crampton, of this town?

Waiter. Cock-eyed Crampton, sir, of the Crooked Billet, is it?

Phil. I don't know. Finch, does he keep a public house?

McC. [*rising scandalized*]. No, no, no. Your father, sir, is a well-known yacht builder, an eminent man here.

Philip informs William that his father has not seen him and his sister for eighteen years. He will not know them. They want William to break the news to him. William is inclined to think that Mr. Crampton will recognize

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his wife without assistance. This possibility had occurred neither to the twins nor to McComas. Nevertheless, Dolly says there will be fireworks and that William must keep his wits about him. They leave the waiter alone on the terrace.

It is only a moment later when Valentine, accompanied by Crampton, ascends the steps from the beach. Taking Mr. Crampton's overcoat, the waiter chats in a smoothly melodious tone. He comments on young Mr. Clandon's great flow of spirits, vein of pleasantry, as you might say. The young gentleman's latest, he remarks, is that Mr. Crampton is his father. He hastens to allay the guest's consternation. Again he returns to the attack deftly, and again sheers off. By the time he states that Mr. McComas is there, Mr. Crampton suspects a trap and demands his coat. At this moment the twins return with McComas.

With an admonition of "steady, sir," to Crampton, William hastens away with the overcoat over his arm. Crampton glares at McComas, keeping his hands behind him. McComas, his brow opener than ever, confronts him in the majesty of a spotless conscience, but is instantly disconcerted when Crampton replies to his greeting that yes, he is here, caught in a trap—a mean trap.

Philip takes the wine list from the table, proposing to discharge his first duty as host. His polite attention and Dolly's unconcerned indifference leave Crampton on the footing of the casual acquaintance picked up that morning at the dentist's. The consciousness of it goes through the father with so keen a pang that he trembles all over. Philip's cheerful politeness upon asking what Mr. Crampton will drink has a startling effect.

Cramp. What d'ye mean, boy?

Phil. Boy! [*Very solemnly.*] Whose fault is it that I am a boy?

Crampton snatches the wine list from him rudely and irresolutely pretends to read it. Philip abandons it to him with perfect politeness.

Mrs. Clandon and Gloria come from the hotel. Mrs. Clandon advances with courageous self-possession, but Crampton's aspect shakes her. She stops suddenly and says anxiously, with a touch of remorse, "Fergus, you are

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greatly changed." His reply, tinged with reproach, is that a man does change in eighteen years. His health is all right, but perhaps it was the change in his happiness that she meant.

Mrs. Clandon asks her husband to sit at the head of the table. All take their places and Philip shuts off his father's inquiry about grace by saying it would be well first to settle what they are about to receive. He asks his father what he will drink.

Cramp. [*scowling and about to reply offensively*]. I——

Waiter [*striking in mellifluously*]. All right, sir. We know what Mr. Crampton likes here, sir. [*He goes into the hotel.*]

Phil. [*looking gravely at his father*]. You frequent bars. Bad habit! [*The cook, accompanied by a waiter with a supply of hot plates, brings in the fish from the kitchen to the service table, and begins slicing it.*]

Cramp. You have learnt your lesson from your mother, I see.

Mrs. C. Phil, will you please remember that your jokes are apt to irritate people who are not accustomed to us, and that your father is our guest to-day.

Cramp. [*bitterly*]. Yes, a guest at the head of my own table. [*The soup plates are removed.*]

Dolly [*sympathetically*]. Yes, it's embarrassing, isn't it? It's just as bad for us, you know.

Phil. Sh! Dolly: we are both wanting in tact. [*To* CRAMPTON.] We mean well, Mr. Crampton; but we are not yet strong in the filial line. [*The waiter returns from the hotel with the drinks.*] William, come and restore good feeling.

Waiter [*cheerfully*]. Yes, sir. Certainly, sir. Small lager for you, sir. [*To* CRAMPTON.] Seltzer and Irish, sir. [*To* MCCOMAS.] Apollinaris, sir. [*To* DOLLY.] Small lager, miss. [*To* MRS. CLANDON, *pouring out wine.*] 413, madam. [*To* VALENTINE.] Large lager for you, sir. [*To* GLORIA.] 413, miss.

Dolly [*drinking*]. To the family!

Phil. [*drinking*]. Hearth and Home! [*Fish is served.*]

McC. [*with an obviously forced attempt at cheerful domesticity*]. We are getting on very nicely after all.

Dolly [*critically*]. After all! After all what, Finch?

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Cramp. [*sarcastically*]. He means that you are getting on very nicely in spite of the presence of your father. Do I take your point rightly, Mr. McComas?

McC. [*disconcerted*]. No, no. I only said "after all" to round off the sentence. I—er—er—er——

Waiter [*tactfully*]. Turbot, sir?

McC. [*intensely grateful for the interruption*]. Thank you, waiter, thank you.

Waiter [*sotto voce*]. Don't mention it, sir. [*He returns to the service table.*]

Cramp. [*to* PHIL]. Have you thought of choosing a profession yet?

Phil. I am keeping my mind open on the subject. William!

Waiter. Yes, sir.

Phil. How long do you think it would take me to learn to be a really smart waiter?

Waiter. Can't be learnt, sir. It's in the character, sir. [*Confidentially to* VALENTINE, *who is looking about for something.*] Bread for the lady, sir? yes, sir. [*He serves bread to* GLORIA, *and resumes at his former pitch.*] Very few are born to it, sir.

Phil. You don't happen to have such a thing as a son, yourself, have you?

Waiter. Yes, sir: oh, yes, sir. [*To* GLORIA, *again dropping his voice.*] A little more fish, miss? you won't care for the joint in the middle of the day.

Glor. No, thank you. [*The fish plates are removed.*]

Dolly. Is your son a waiter, too, William?

Waiter [*serving* GLORIA *with fowl*]. Oh, no, miss, he's too impetuous. He's at the bar.

McC. [*patronizingly*]. A potman, eh?

Waiter [*with a touch of melancholy, as if recalling a disappointment softened by time*]. No, sir: the other bar—your profession, sir. A. Q. C., sir.

McC. [*embarrassed*]. I'm sure I beg your pardon.

Waiter. Not at all, sir. Very natural mistake, I'm sure, sir. I've often wished he was a potman, sir. Would have been off my hands ever so much sooner, sir. [*Aside to* VALENTINE, *who is again in difficulties.*] Salt at your elbow, sir. [*Resuming.*] Yes, sir: had to support him until he was thirty-seven, sir. But doing well now, sir: very

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satisfactory indeed, sir. Nothing less than fifty guineas, sir.

McComas exclaims at this result of democracy, but the waiter replies that it is only education, the fruit of scholarships, and bustles off. Dolly sees a chance to get into London society through an introduction to William's son. A moment later she arouses her father's ire by betraying ignorance of the Church of England.

Crampton rises violently amid general consternation, calling upon McComas to witness how his children have been brought up. No sooner has he been quieted than he breaks out with fresh rage at seeing Dolly take a cigarette. She leaves the table and goes down the steps. Mrs. Clandon excuses herself stiffly and follows Dolly. Crampton's eyes follow his wife with bitter hatred. The others feel the incident to be a very painful one.

Cramp. [*throwing himself back in his chair*]. There's a mother for you, McComas! There's a mother for you!

Glor. [*steadfastly*]. Yes: a good mother.

Cramp. And a bad father? That's what you mean, eh?

Val. [*rising indignantly and addressing* GLORIA]. Miss Clandon, I——

Cramp. [*turning on him*]. That girl's name is Crampton, Mr. Valentine, not Clandon. Do you wish to join them in insulting me?

Val. [*ignoring him*]. I'm overwhelmed, Miss Clandon. It's all my fault: I brought him here: I'm responsible for him. And I'm ashamed of him.

Cramp. What d'y' mean?

Glor. [*rising coldly*]. No harm has been done, Mr. Valentine. We have all been a little childish, I am afraid. Our party has been a failure: let us break it up and have done with it. [*She puts her chair aside and turns to the steps, adding, with slighting composure, as she passes* CRAMPTON.] Good-bye, father. [*She descends the steps with cold, disgusted indifference.*]

The waiter, whose solicitude for the tastes of the various members of the party has been truly remarkable, now offers Mr. Crampton his overcoat, which the latter grabs, and produces from the tail pocket of his dresscoat a book with a lady's handkerchief between the pages. He offers

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the book to Valentine, saying that the eldest young lady is reading it. Valentine, before going to find Gloria, tells Crampton that he ought to be ashamed of himself for acting like a bear.

Cramp. [*heartrent*]. She told you what I am—a father—a father robbed of his children. What are the hearts of this generation like? Am I to come here after all these years—to see what my children are for the first time!—to hear their voices—and carry it all off like a fashionable visitor; drop in to lunch; be Mr. Crampton—Mister Crampton! What right have they to talk to me like that? I'm their father: do they deny that? I'm a man, with the feelings of our common humanity: have I no rights, no claims? In all these years who have I had round me? Servants, clerks, business acquaintances. I've had respect from them—aye, kindness. Would one of them have spoken to me as that girl spoke?—would one of them have laughed at me as that boy was laughing at me all the time? [*Frantically.*] My own children! Mister Crampton! My——

Valentine retorts with a brief rhapsody on Gloria, and rushes toward the steps, bouncing into the waiter and pausing to give him Dolly's crown piece, which he says represents a professional man's earnings for six weeks. Crampton, crossing the terrace to the iron table and sitting down, observes that he knows what his six weeks' earnings come to.

Waiter [*philosophically*]. Well, sir, you never can tell. That's a principle in life with me, sir, if you'll excuse my having such a thing, sir. [*Delicately sinking the philosopher in the waiter for a moment.*] Perhaps you haven't noticed that you hadn't touched that Seltzer and Irish, sir, when the party broke up. [*He takes the tumbler from the luncheon table, and sets it before* CRAMPTON.] Yes, sir, you never can tell. There was my son, sir! who ever thought that he would rise to wear a silk gown, sir? And yet to-day, sir, nothing less than fifty guineas, sir. What a lesson, sir!

Cramp. Well, I hope he is grateful to you, and recognizes what he owes you.

Waiter. We get on together very well, very well indeed, sir, considering the difference in our stations.

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When Gloria comes up the steps alone presently her father looks defiantly at her, with the brutal obstinacy of his mouth and the wistfulness of his eyes contradicting each other pathetically. She asks him what he expects them to feel for him after a separation of eighteen years, and why he is less civil to them than other people are.

Evidently Mr. Crampton is not very fond of them, Gloria says, and there is no reason why he should be, but she thinks that surely they can meet without quarreling. This seems very doubtful, she being as stubborn as he, and one difference following promptly upon another. At last she calls over the balustrade to Valentine, and her father goes into the hotel. Valentine comes running up the steps.

Val. [*panting*]. What's the matter? [*Looking round.*] Where's Crampton?

Glor. Gone. [VALENTINE'S *face lights up with sudden joy, dread, and mischief. He has just realized that he is alone with* GLORIA. *She continues indifferently.*] I thought he was ill; but he recovered himself. He wouldn't wait for you. I am sorry. [*She goes for her book and parasol.*]

Val. So much the better. He gets on my nerves after a while. [*Pretending to forget himself.*] How could that man have so beautiful a daughter!

Glor. [*taken aback for a moment; then answering him with polite but intentional contempt*]. That seems to be an attempt at what is called a pretty speech. Let me say at once, Mr. Valentine, that pretty speeches make very sickly conversation. Pray let us be friends, if we are to be friends, in a sensible and wholesome way. I have no intention of getting married; and unless you are content to accept that state of things, we had much better not cultivate each other's acquaintance.

Val. [*cautiously*]. I see. May I ask just this one question? Is your objection an objection to marriage as an institution, or merely an objection to marrying me personally?

Glor. I do not know you well enough, Mr. Valentine, to have any opinion on the subject of your personal merits. [*She turns away from him with infinite indifference, and sits down with her book on the garden seat.*] I do not think the

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conditions of marriage at present are such as any self-respecting woman can accept.

Val. [*instantly changing his tone for one of cordial sincerity, as if he frankly accepted her terms and was delighted and reassured by her principles*]. Oh, then that's a point of sympathy between us already. I quite agree with you: the conditions are most unfair. [*He takes off his hat and throws it gayly on the iron table.*] No, what I want is to get rid of all that nonsense. [*He sits down beside her, so naturally that she does not think of objecting, and proceeds with enthusiasm.*] Don't you think it a horrible thing that a man and a woman can hardly know one another without being supposed to have designs of that kind? As if there were no other interests—no other subjects of conversation—as if women were capable of nothing better!

Glor. [*interested*]. Ah, now you are beginning to talk humanly and sensibly, Mr. Valentine.

Val. [*with a gleam in his eye at the success of his hunter's guile*]. Of course!—two intelligent people like us. Isn't it pleasant, in this stupid, convention-ridden world, to meet with some one on the same plane—some one with an unprejudiced, enlightened mind?

Glor. [*earnestly*]. I hope to meet many such people in England.

Val. [*dubiously*]. Hm! There are a good many people here—nearly forty millions. They're not all consumptive members of the highly educated classes like the people in Madeira.

Glor. [*now full of her subject*]. Oh, everybody is stupid and prejudiced in Madeira—weak, sentimental creatures! I hate weakness; and I hate sentiment.

Val. That's what makes you so inspiring.

Glor. [*with a slight laugh*]. Am I inspiring?

Val. Yes. Strength's infectious.

Glor. Weakness is, I know.

Val. [*with conviction*]. You're strong. Do you know that you changed the world for me this morning? I was in the dumps, thinking of my unpaid rent, frightened about the future. When you came in, I was dazzled. [*Her brow clouds a little. He goes on quickly.*] That was silly, of course; but really and truly something happened to me. Explain it how you will, my blood got—[*he hesitates, try-*

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ing to think of a sufficiently unimpassioned word]—oxygenated: my muscles braced; my mind cleared; my courage rose. That's odd, isn't it? considering that I am not at all a sentimental man.

Glor. [*uneasily, rising*]. Let us go back to the beach.

Val. [*darkly—looking up at her*]. What! you feel it, too?

Glor. Feel what?

Val. Dread.

Glor. Dread!

Val. As if something were going to happen. It came over me suddenly just before you proposed that we should run away to the others.

Glor. [*amazed*]. That's strange—very strange! I had the same presentiment.

Val. How extraordinary! [*Rising.*] Well, shall we run away?

Glor. Run away! Oh, no: that would be childish. [*She sits down again. He resumes his seat beside her, and watches her with a gravely sympathetic air. She is thoughtful and a little troubled as she adds.*] I wonder what is the scientific explanation of those fancies that cross us occasionally!

Val. Ah, I wonder! It's a curiously helpless sensation, isn't it?

Glor. [*rebelling against the word*]. Helpless?

Val. Yes. As if Nature, after allowing us to belong to ourselves and do what we judged right and reasonable for all these years, were suddenly lifting her great hand to take us—her two little children—by the scruffs of our little necks, and use us, in spite of ourselves, for her own purposes, in her own way.

Glor. Isn't that rather fanciful?

Val. [*with a new and startling transition to a tone of utter recklessness*]. I don't know. I don't care. [*Bursting out reproachfully.*] Oh, Miss Clandon, Miss Clandon, how could you?

Glor. What have I done?

Val. Thrown this enchantment on me. I'm honestly trying to be sensible—scientific—everything that you wish me to be. But—but—oh, don't you see what you have set to work in my imagination?

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Glor. [*with indignant, scornful sternness*]. I hope you are not going to be so foolish—so vulgar—as to say love.

Val. [*with ironical haste to disclaim such a weakness*]. No, no, no. Not love: we know better than that. Let's call it chemistry. You can't deny that there is such a thing as chemical action, chemical affinity, chemical combination—the most irresistible of all natural forces. Well, you're attracting me irresistibly—chemically.

Glor. [*contemptuously*]. Nonsense!

Val. Of course it's nonsense, you stupid girl. [GLORIA *recoils in outraged surprise.*] Yes, stupid girl, that's a scientific fact, anyhow. You're a prig—a feminine prig: that's what you are. [*Rising.*] Now I suppose you've done with me forever. [*He goes to the iron table and takes up his hat.*]

Glor. [*with elaborate calm, sitting up like a high-school mistress posing to be photographed*]. That shows how very little you understand my real character. I am not in the least offended. [*He pauses and puts his hat down again.*] I am always willing to be told of my own defects, Mr. Valentine, by my friends, even when they are as absurdly mistaken about me as you are. I have many faults—very serious faults—of character and temper; but if there is one thing that I am not, it is what you call a prig. [*She closes her lips trimly and looks steadily and challengingly at him as she sits more collectedly than ever.*]

Val. [*returning to the end of the garden seat to confront her more emphatically*]. Oh, yes, you are. My reason tells me so, my knowledge tells me so, my experience tells me so.

Glor. Excuse my reminding you that your reason and your knowledge and your experience are not infallible. At least I hope not.

Val. I must believe them. Unless you wish me to believe my eyes, my heart, my instincts, my imagination, which are all telling me the most monstrous lies about you.

Glor. [*the collectedness beginning to relax*]. Lies!

Val. [*obstinately*]. Yes, lies. [*He sits down again beside her.*] Do you expect me to believe that you are the most beautiful woman in the world?

Glor. That is ridiculous, and rather personal.

Val. Of course it's ridiculous. Well, that's what

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my eyes tell me. [GLORIA *makes a movement of contemptuous protest.*] No, I'm not flattering. I tell you I don't believe it. [*She is ashamed to find that this does not quite please her either.*] Do you think that if you were to turn away in disgust from my weakness, I should sit down here and cry like a child?

Glor. [*beginning to find that she must speak shortly and pointedly to keep her voice steady*]. Why should you, pray?

Val. [*with a stir of feeling beginning to agitate his voice*]. Of course not: I'm not such an idiot. And yet my heart tells me I should—my fool of a heart. But I'll argue with my heart and bring it to reason. If I loved you a thousand times, I'll force myself to look the truth steadily in the face. After all, it's easy to be sensible: the facts are the facts. What's this place? it's not heaven: it's the Marine Hotel. What's the time? it's not eternity: it's about half-past one in the afternoon. What am I? a dentist—a five-shilling dentist!

Glor. And I am a feminine prig.

Val. [*passionately*]. No, no, I can't face that; I must have one illusion left—the illusion about you. I love you. [*He turns toward her as if the impulse to touch her were ungovernable: she rises and stands on her guard wrathfully. He springs up impatiently and retreats a step.*] Oh, what a fool I am!—an idiot! You don't understand; I might as well talk to the stones on the beach. [*He turns away, discouraged.*]

Glor. [*reassured by his withdrawal, and a little remorseful*]. I am sorry. I do not mean to be unsympathetic, Mr. Valentine; but what can I say?

Val. [*returning to her with all his recklessness of manner replaced by an engaging and chivalrous respect*]. You can say nothing, Miss Clandon. I beg your pardon: it was my own fault, or rather my own bad luck. You see, it all depended on your naturally liking me. [*She is about to speak: he stops her deprecatingly.*] Oh, I know you mustn't tell me whether you like me or not; but——

Glor. [*her principles up in arms at once*]. Must not! Why not? I am a free woman: why should I not tell you?

Val. [*pleading in terror, and retreating*]. Don't. I'm afraid to hear.

Glor. [*no longer scornful*]. You need not be afraid. I

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think you are sentimental, and a little foolish; but I like you.

Val. [*dropping into the iron chair as if crushed*]. Then it's all over. [*He becomes the picture of despair.*]

Glor. [*puzzled, approaching him*]. But why?

Val. Because liking is not enough. Now that I think down into it seriously, I don't know whether I like you or not.

Glor. [*looking down at him with wondering concern*]. I'm sorry.

Val. [*in an agony of restrained passion*]. Oh, don't pity me. Your voice is tearing my heart to pieces. Let me alone, Gloria. You go down into the very depths of me, troubling and stirring me—I can't struggle with it—I can't tell you——

Glor. [*breaking down suddenly*]. Oh, stop telling me what you feel: I can't bear it.

Val. [*springing up triumphantly, the agonized voice now solid, ringing, and jubilant*]. Ah, it's come at last—my moment of courage. [*He seizes her hands; she looks at him in terror.*] Our moment of courage! [*He draws her to him; kisses her with impetuous strength; and laughs boyishly.*] Now you've done it, Gloria. It's all over: we're in love with one another. [*She can only gasp at him.*] But what a dragon you were! And how hideously afraid I was!

Phil's voice [*calling from the beach*]. Valentine!

Dolly's voice. Mr. Valentine!

Val. Good-bye. Forgive me.

He rapidly kisses her hands, and runs away to the steps, where he meets Mrs. Clandon ascending. Gloria, quite lost, can only stare after him. She reproaches her mother for teaching her nothing, and asked what the matter is, replies with the most intense expression, "Shame—shame—shame." Blushing unendurably, she covers her face with her hands and turns away from her mother.

Apprised by the twins that Valentine kissed Gloria on the terrace before every one, Mrs. Clandon has somewhat to say to the young man as to that infraction of Twentieth Century principles when he enters her sitting-room in the Marine Hotel. She prefaces her remarks by saying that she is at a disadvantage in discussing those affairs of the

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heart in which he appears to be an expert. It is to the Cause of Humanity that her life is devoted.

Val. [*surrendering*]. Well, yes: I'm in love with Gloria. [*Interposing as she is about to speak.*] I know what you're going to say: I've no money.

Mrs. C. I care very little about money, Mr. Valentine.

Val. Then you're very different to all the other mothers who have interviewed me.

Mrs. C. Ah, now we are coming to it, Mr. Valentine. You are an old hand at this. [*He opens his mouth to protest: she cuts him short with some indignation.*] Oh, do you think, little as I understand these matters, that I have not common sense enough to know that a man who could make as much way in one interview with such a woman as my daughter, can hardly be a novice?

Val. I assure you——

Mrs. C. [*stopping him*]. I am not blaming you, Mr. Valentine. It is Gloria's business to take care of herself; and you have a right to amuse yourself as you please. But——

Val. [*protesting*]. Amuse myself! Oh, Mrs. Clandon!

Mrs. C. [*relentlessly*]. On your honor, Mr. Valentine, are you in earnest?

Val. [*desperately*]. On my honor I am in earnest. [*She looks searchingly at him. His sense of humor gets the better of him; and he adds quaintly.*] Only, I always have been in earnest; and yet—here I am, you see!

Mrs. C. This is just what I suspected. [*Severely.*] Mr. Valentine, you are one of those men who play with women's affections.

Val. Well, why not, if the Cause of Humanity is the only thing worth being serious about? However, I understand. [*Rising and taking his hat with formal politeness.*] You wish me to discontinue my visits.

Mrs. C. No, I am sensible enough to be well aware that Gloria's best chance of escape from you now is to become better acquainted with you.

Val. [*unaffectedly alarmed*]. Oh, don't say that, Mrs. Clandon. You don't think that, do you?

Mrs. C. I have great faith, Mr. Valentine, in the sound training Gloria's mind has had since she was a child.

Val. [*amazingly relieved*]. O-oh! Oh, that's all right.

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[*He sits down again and throws his hat flippantly aside with the air of a man who has no longer anything to fear.*]

Mrs. C. [*indignant at his assurance*]. What do you mean?

Val. [*turning confidentially to her*]. Come, shall I teach you something, Mrs. Clandon?

Mrs. C. [*stiffly*]. I am always willing to learn.

Val. Have you ever studied the subject of gunnery—artillery—cannons and war-ships and so on?

Mrs. C. Has gunnery anything to do with Gloria?

Val. A great deal—by way of illustration. During this whole century, my dear Mrs. Clandon, the progress of artillery has been a duel between the maker of cannons and the maker of armor plates to keep the cannon balls out. You build a ship proof against the best gun known: somebody makes a better gun and sinks your ship. You build a heavier ship, proof against that gun: somebody makes a heavier gun and sinks you again. And so on. Well, the duel of sex is just like that.

Mrs. C. The duel of sex!

Val. Yes, you've heard of the duel of sex, haven't you? Oh, I forgot: you've been in Madeira: the expression has come up since your time. Need I explain it?

Mrs. C. [*contemptuously*]. No.

Valentine explains nevertheless that the old-fashioned mother gave her daughter an old-fashioned education to protect her against the wiles of man. Well, the old-fashioned man got round her. So the old-fashioned woman armed her daughter with a scientific education. Valentine educated himself scientifically. He learnt how to circumvent the Women's Rights woman before he was twenty-three.

Upon learning from Mrs. Clandon that Gloria left the room expressly to avoid him, Valentine says that is a good sign, she evidently being mortally afraid of him, as he is of her. At this point he turns to go and finds himself face to face with Gloria, who has just entered. She looks steadfastly at him, white with indignation at having just learned from Dolly that her mother is discussing her affairs.

If she is one of those weak creatures, Gloria says, born to be mastered by the first man whose eye is caught by

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them, she supposes she must fulfil her destiny, but she insists that her mother shall spare her the humiliation of trying to save her. Valentine rises to the opportunity with an ardent asseveration of love. Mrs. Clandon, with intense scorn, tells Gloria to ask him how many other women he has inspired before; how many times he has laid the trap in which he has caught her; how much practice it has taken to make him perfect in his chosen part in life as a duellist of sex.

Val. This isn't fair. You're abusing my confidence, Mrs. Clandon.

Mrs. C. Ask him, Gloria.

Glor. [*in a flush of rage, going over to him with her fists clenched*]. Is that true?

Val. Don't be angry——

Glor. [*interrupting him implacably*]. Is it true? Did you ever say that before? Did you ever feel that before—for another woman?

Val. [*bluntly*]. Yes. [GLORIA *raises her clenched hands.*]

Mrs. C. [*horrified, springing to her side and catching her uplifted arm*]. Gloria! My dear! You're forgetting yourself. [GLORIA, *with a deep expiration, slowly relaxes her threatening attitude.*]

Val. Remember: a man's power of love and admiration is like any other of his powers: he has to throw it away many times before he learns what is really worthy of it.

Mrs. C. Another of the old speeches, Gloria. Take care.

Val. [*remonstrating*]. Oh!

Glor. [*to* MRS. CLANDON, *with contemptuous self-possession*]. Do you think I need to be warned now? [*To* VALENTINE.] You have tried to make me love you.

Val. I have.

Glor. Well, you have succeeded in making me hate you—passionately.

Val. [*philosophically*]. It's surprising how little difference there is between the two. [GLORIA *turns indignantly away from him. He continues, to* MRS. CLANDON.] I know men whose wives love them; and they go on exactly like that.

Mrs. C. Excuse me, Mr. Valentine; but had you not better go?

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Glor. You need not send him away on my account, mother. He is nothing to me now; and he will amuse Dolly and Phil. [*She sits down with slighting indifference at the end of the table nearest the window.*]

Mrs. Clandon is called out to see McComas. Valentine informs Gloria that she will forgive him sooner or later, and urges her to do it now. Never! is her retort, while grass grows and water runs. He is quite unabashed. While grass grows and water runs, he declares triumphantly, he shall never be unhappy again. The thought of her will always make him wild with joy. And he never said that before: it's new. It won't be, she observes, when he says it to the next woman.

The irrepressible twins burst into the room, but check their mad career at finding Valentine on his knees. He will not permit them to retire. Their sister is not entertaining his addresses, he explains. He has been rejected. Phil tells him not to mind. He would never have been able to call his soul his own if Gloria had accepted him. He can now begin a new chapter in his life. Dolly thinks this will be chapter seventeen, or thereabout. Valentine implores her not to say such things as that. That is just the sort of thoughtless remark that makes a lot of mischief.

McComas, looking very grave, comes in quickly with Mrs. Clandon. He brings very serious news from Mr. Crampton. The two younger children are not of age, and their father demands the custody of them. The deed of separation, it is true, gave Mrs. Clandon the custody of the children, but it also contained a covenant that she was not to approach or molest him in any way. He claims that he was brought to the hotel by a plot in which Mr. Valentine acted as agent, alleging, moreover, that Mr. Valentine drugged him.

The communication produces some astonishment. Valentine admits that he did drug Mr. Crampton. Dolly says he did it for five shillings extra. McComas's temper grows shorter. He proceeds to inform Gloria that her father regards Mr. Valentine as a fortune hunter. This charge Valentine does not attempt to refute. Indeed, he asks if they expect his wife to live on what he earns.

Revolted in the extreme by all this lightmindedness,

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ARNOLD DALY AS MR. VALENTINE

Valentine. The thought of you will always make me wild with joy. No, I never said that before: that's new.
Gloria. It will not be new when you say it to the next woman.

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McComas announces that he will return and tell Mr. Crampton that this family is no place for a father.

He makes a final plea, however, for Mr. Crampton, who may have an abominable temper, no manners, tact, or grace, who can never gain any one's affection unless they will take his desire for it on trust, but who is nevertheless entitled to pity from his own flesh and blood. Mrs. Clandon replies that there is not the least use in talking to her about her husband.

The question remains to be settled whether Crampton is bound by the deed of separation. The first step is for both sides to obtain counsel's opinion as to that point according to McComas. They might have a neutral meeting to settle the difficulty there in the hotel that night. As McComas was just coming to see them he met a most eminent member of the bar, a friend of his, who would be the very man to mediate. Mrs. Clandon reluctantly acquiesces.

Strings of Chinese lanterns, seen through the open windows of the Clandons' sitting-room, give a festive tone to the evening. There is to be a fancy ball at the hotel and the twins are agog with excitement. Crampton, cowed and anxious, arrives early with McComas. McComas tells the waiter that they are expecting a Mr. Boon. His name is spelt B. O. H. U. N. The waiter says his own name is Boon, and by rights he should spell it with the aitch, but he thinks it best not to take that liberty. There is Norman blood in it; and Norman blood is not a recommendation to a waiter.

McC. Well, well: "True hearts are more than coronets, and simple faith than Norman blood."

Waiter. That depends a good deal on one's station in life, sir. If you were a waiter, sir, you'd find that simple faith would leave you just as short as Norman blood.

When Gloria comes in McComas leaves her with Crampton. Father and daughter look at one another for a moment with a melancholy sense of humor, and then he holds her hand! A chord of sympathy is touched, but they have to go cautiously to slip over the little discords that are so easily struck. She tells him that her wo-

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manly feelings may be on his side, but that her conscience is on her mother's, and he is content with the division.

Valentine enters the room and Gloria immediately becomes deliberately haughty. Valentine has met the gentleman of whom McComas spoke, and characterizes him as the very incarnation of intellect. You can hear his mind working, he says. He bought a false nose and went into the fancy ball. The waiter ushers in Mrs. Clandon and McComas.

A grotesquely majestic stranger in a domino and false nose, with goggles, appears at the window and enters the room. He takes off the false nose and domino and throws them on the table like a champion throwing down his glove. He is now seen to be a stout, tall man between forty and fifty, clean shaven, with a midnight-oil pallor emphasized by stiff black hair, cropped short and oiled, and eyebrows like early Victorian upholstery. Physically and spiritually, a coarsened man: in cunning and logic, a ruthlessly sharpened one. His bearing as he enters is sufficiently imposing and disquieting; but when he speaks, his powerful, menacing voice, impressively articulated speech, strong, inexorable manner, and a terrifying power of intensely critical listening raise the impression produced by him to absolute tremendousness. He announces that his name is Bohun. The others introduce themselves to him.

Waiter [*entering anxiously through the window*]. Beg pardon, ma'am; but can you tell me what became of that— [*He recognizes* BOHUN, *and loses all his self-possession.* BOHUN *waits rigidly for him to pull himself together. After a pathetic exhibition of confusion, he recovers himself sufficiently to address* BOHUN *weakly but coherently.*] Beg pardon, sir, I'm sure, sir. Was—was it you, sir?

Bohun [*ruthlessly*]. It was I.

Waiter [*brokenly*]. Yes, sir. [*Unable to restrain his tears.*] You in a false nose, Walter! [*He sinks faintly into a chair at the table.*] I beg your pardon, ma'am, I'm sure. A little giddiness——

Bohun [*commandingly*]. You will excuse him, Mrs. Clandon, when I inform you that he is my father.

Waiter [*heartbroken*]. Oh, no, no, Walter. A waiter for

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your father on the top of a false nose! What will they think of you?

Mrs. C. [*going to the waiter's chair in her kindest manner*]. I am delighted to hear it, Mr. Bohun. Your father has been an excellent friend to us since we came here.

[BOHUN *bows gravely.*]

Waiter [*shaking his head*]. Oh, no, ma'am. It's very kind of you—very ladylike and affable indeed, ma'am; but I should feel at a great disadvantage off my own proper footing. Never mind my being the gentleman's father, ma'am: it is only the accident of birth after all, ma'am. [*He gets up feebly.*] You'll excuse me, I'm sure, having interrupted your business. [*He begins to make his way along the table, supporting himself from chair to chair, with his eye on the door.*]

Bohun. One moment. [*The waiter stops, with a sinking heart.*] My father was a witness of what passed to-day, was he not, Mrs. Clandon?

The waiter pleads as an excuse to escape that it is a very busy evening for him, but Bohun tells him inexorably that he must remain. Gloria, however, asks for a cup of coffee. The waiter gives a gasp of hope. Other orders follow, and in two minutes he has sounded the whole gamut of human happiness and ambles off through the window. Learning that Crampton is Mrs. Clandon's husband, Bohun convenes court at once.

Bohun. In this family, it appears, the husband's name is Crampton: the wife's Clandon. Thus we have on the very threshold of the case an element of confusion.

Val. [*getting up and speaking across to him with one knee on the ottoman*]. But it's perfectly simple.

Bohun [*annihilating him with a vocal thunderbolt*]. It is. Mrs. Clandon has adopted another name. That is the obvious explanation which you feared I could not find out for myself. You mistrust my intelligence, Mr. Valentine—— [*Stopping him as he is about to protest.*] No: I don't want you to answer that: I want you to think over it when you feel your next impulse to interrupt me.

Bohun's specialty is being right when other people are wrong, he says, squelching McComas. Crampton finds it difficult to state his desires exactly.

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Bohun. Come: I'll help you out. What do you object to in the present circumstances of the children?

Cramp. I object to the way they have been brought up.

Bohun. How do you propose to alter that now?

Cramp. I think they ought to dress more quietly.

Val. Nonsense.

Bohun [*instantly flinging himself back in his chair, outraged by the interruption*]. When you are done, Mr. Valentine—when you are quite done.

Val. What's wrong with Miss Clandon's dress?

Cramp. [*hotly to* VALENTINE]. My opinion is as good as yours.

Glor. [*warningly*]. Father!

Cramp. [*subsiding piteously*]. I didn't mean you, my dear. [*Pleading earnestly to* BOHUN.] But the two younger ones! you have not seen them, Mr. Bohun; and indeed I think you would agree with me that there is something very noticeable, something almost gay and frivolous in their style of dressing.

Mrs. C. [*impatiently*]. Do you suppose I choose their clothes for them? Really, this is childish.

Cramp. [*furious, rising*]. Childish! [MRS. CLANDON *rises indignantly*].

McC. *Val.* *Glor.* [*all rising and speaking together.*] Crampton, you promised ——Ridiculous. They dress charmingly. Pray let us behave reasonably.

The waiter jingles his tray warningly as he comes softly to the table. Mrs. Clandon asks the waiter, as an observer of English society, whether he thinks her children are overdressed. He is assuring the company that they might be the son and daughter of a dean, when a harlequin and columbine whirl into the room to the music of the band. They are presented to Mr. Bohun as the children in question. Crampton seizes upon the evidence of the costumes as bearing him out, but Dolly makes him admit the costumes are pretty. Bohun takes McComas's chair for Dolly.

Bohun. Now, Mr. Crampton, the facts are before you—both of them. You think you'd like to have your two youngest children to live with you. Well, you wouldn't—— [CRAMPTON *tries to protest; but* BOHUN *will not have it on*

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any terms.] No, you wouldn't: you think you would; but I know better than you. You'd want this young lady here to give up dressing like a stage columbine in the evening and like a fashionable columbine in the morning. Well, she won't—never. She thinks she will; but——

Dolly [*interrupting him*]. No, I don't. [*Resolutely.*] I'll never give up dressing prettily. Never. As Gloria said to that man in Madeira, never, never, never while grass grows or water runs.

Val. [*rising in the wildest agitation*]. What! What! [*Beginning to speak very fast.*] When did she say that? Who did she say that to?

Bohun [*throwing himself back with massive, pitying remonstrance*]. Mr. Valentine——

Val. [*pepperly*]. Don't you interrupt me, sir: this is something really serious. I insist on knowing who Miss Clandon said that to.

Dolly. Perhaps Phil remembers. Which was it, Phil? number three or number five?

Val. Number five!!!

Phil. Courage, Valentine. It wasn't number five: it was only a tame naval lieutenant that was always on hand —the most patient and harmless of mortals.

Glor. [*coldly*]. What are we discussing now, pray?

Val. [*very red*]. Excuse me: I am sorry I interrupted. I shall intrude no further, Mrs. Clandon. [*He bows to* MRS. CLANDON *and marches away into the garden, boiling with suppressed rage.*]

Dolly. Hmhm!

Phil. Ahah!

Glor. Please go on, Mr. Bohun.

Bohun asks unexpectedly if Dolly has any intention of getting married. She is a little startled, but is collected enough to reply casually that McComas calls her by her Christian name. The scandalized McComas has to be squelched again. Bohun proceeds to say that if Dolly doesn't marry McComas she will marry somebody else. So that solves the difficulty as to her not bearing her father's name. The other young lady, he adds, intends to get married. He will not be put down by Gloria's protests. If he chose he could tell her what her name will be.

Bohun rises and unrolls his domino, putting the false

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nose on the table. Crampton's idea of going to the law is all nonsense, he says. The children will be of age before he can get the point decided. He advises a friendly arrangement. The strength of Mrs. Clandon's position and that of the children lies in their being very agreeable people personally, he says; Crampton's in his income. He claps on the false nose and is again grotesquely transfigured. Exclaiming that now he looks quite like a human being, Dolly asks for a dance with him. He seizes her and dances off with her in a powerful manner, but with studied propriety and grace.

Philip asks the waiter to get false noses and dominoes for his father and McComas. Crampton, determined to be genial, accepts the idea, but McComas accompanies them with ill grace. Just as Mrs. Clandon and Gloria are about to leave the room also, Valentine returns. He has come back, he says, simply because he is penniless and can't get out the other way without a five-shilling ticket. Gloria apparently wishes to provoke an altercation because Valentine has implied that her past has been like his. Finally Mrs. Clandon proposes that she and Gloria shall go and look for Dolly. Gloria tells her mother to go without her. She wishes to speak to Mr. Valentine alone.

What Gloria has to say to Valentine is that he dragged her down to his level for a moment on the terrace, but he must know that if such a thing had ever happened before, if she had been aware of her own miserable weakness, she would have been on her guard. She is pretty highhanded, feeling that now she can do as she likes with him. Valentine was tempted to awaken her heart, he tells her. Nature was in deadly earnest with him. When the great moment came it was he who was stirred. She was only offended, shocked like a very ordinary young lady. He says he will not trouble her with conventional apologies, and makes resolutely for the door.

She watches him, appalled to see him slipping from her grasp. As he turns the handle of the door he pauses to offer her his hand, proposing that they part kindly. Enormously relieved, Gloria immediately turns her back on him, saying good-bye, and expressing the hope that he will soon recover from the wound. It flashes upon him that

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he is still master of the situation. He will recover, he replies; such wounds heal more than they harm, and after all, he still has his own Gloria. She faces him quickly. The Gloria of his imagination, he means. She tells him proudly to keep his own Gloria, but her emotion begins to break through her pride. The real Gloria was shocked by the feeling that all her power over herself had broken down. The color rushes over her face.

Val. Take care. I'm losing my senses again. [*Summoning all her courage, she takes away her hand from her face and puts it on his right shoulder, turning him toward her and looking him straight in the eyes. He begins to protest agitatedly.*] Gloria, be sensible: it's no use: I haven't a penny in the world.

Glo. Can't you earn one? Other people do.

Val. [*half delighted, half frightened*]. I never could—you'd be unhappy—— My dearest love: I should be the merest fortune-hunting adventurer if—— [*Her grip of his arms tightens; and she kisses him.*] Oh, Lord! [*Breathless.*] Oh, I—— [*He gasps.*] I don't know anything about women: twelve years' experience is not enough. [*In a gust of jealousy she throws him away from her; and he reels back into the chair like a leaf before the wind, as* DOLLY *dances in, waltzing with the waiter, followed by* MRS. CLANDON *and* FINCH, *also waltzing, and* PHIL *pirouetting by himself.*]

Dolly [*sinking on the chair at the writing-table*]. Oh, I'm out of breath. How beautifully you waltz, William!

Mrs. C. [*sinking on the saddle-bag seat on the hearth*]. Oh, how could you make me do such a silly thing, Finch! I haven't danced since the soirée at South Place twenty years ago.

Glor. [*peremptorily to* VALENTINE]. Get up. [VALENTINE *gets up abjectly.*] Now let us have no false delicacy. Tell my mother that we have agreed to marry one another. [*A silence of stupefaction ensues.* VALENTINE, *dumb with panic, looks at them with an obvious impulse to run away.*]

Dolly [*breaking the silence*]. Number six!

Phil. Sh!

Dolly [*tumultuously*]. Oh, my feelings! I want to kiss somebody; and we bar it in the family. Where's Finch?

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McC. [*starting violently*]. No, positively—— [CRAMPTON *appears at the window.*]

It is not easy to reconcile Mr. Crampton to the idea of the marriage. He asks Mr. Bohun if he does not think the match an unwise one. Mr. Bohun replies that he does. All matches are unwise. It's unwise to be born; it's unwise to be married; it's unwise to live; and it's wise to die. Then so much the worse for wisdom, puts in the balmy waiter. He exhorts Valentine to cheer up. Every man is frightened at marriage when it comes to the point, he avers; but it often turns out very comfortable, very happy and enjoyable indeed—from time to time. You never can tell.

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WHEN WE WERE TWENTY-ONE

By H. V. Esmond

First played in London at the Comedy Theatre on September 2, 1901.

Argument: Dick Carewe has reared the son of a dead friend and, finally, brought about the young man's engagement to a girl whom he loves himself, but his ward conceives a passion for a music-hall performer. Dick exposes the bad character of this woman publicly, only to find that his ward has already married her. Will the boy be permanently estranged from Dick, and will the girl whom he has slighted be inconsolable?

The sitting-room of Dick Carewe's flat in Clement's Inn has been made tidy for a meeting of his intimate cronies. This coterie style themselves the Trinity although, like the Three Musketeers, they are four in number. They are going to celebrate the forty-seventh birthday of Sir Horace Plumely, familiarly "Waddles," in allusion to his peculiar gait and portly figure. Dick's household includes Richard Audaine, nicknamed the Imp, whom Dick has reared from infancy and is now twenty-one; and Mrs. Ericson and her daughter Phyllis, the Imp's fiancée, whom Dick has also taken under his wing.

Phyllis, who is helping her mother put the room tidy, has just heard that the Imp has been seen driving a dog cart and wonders if Dick knows of his extravagance. Nevertheless, when her mother replies that she expects that the young man is up to a good many things that Dick doesn't know about, Phyllis protests against this disrespect to her future husband. One thing that Mrs. Ericson does not understand is why Phyllis should put a key under the doormat, thus enabling the Imp, who has lost his own key, to stay out as late as he likes without borrowing Dick's.

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Mrs. Ericson. Phyllis, I really don't believe I shall ever be able to understand you.

Phyllis. That's because of the difference in our ages—you're so very young, and I'm so very old.

Mrs. E. [*feebly*]. Why are you?

Phyl. [*with a laugh*]. Because, if I'm going to be married to the Imp, I shall need to know a great deal.

Mrs. E. It's very upsetting.

Phyl. What is?

Mrs. E. Oh, everything. I'm sometimes tempted to think—you won't marry him at all.

Phyl. I will. I said I would, and everybody was pleased, and so I suppose I was—fearfully—pleased. After all, nothing matters as long as other people are pleased, does it?

Mrs. E. It's very nice to please others, if it doesn't worry one.

Mrs. Ericson and her daughter leave the room just before Waddles enters with the Soldier Man, as they call Colonel Miles Grahame. The Colonel is very tall, very military looking, bronzed, and handsome. Waddles is carrying a drink. He sighs contentedly and says they are having a splendid evening. Terrence McGrath (the Doctor), a well set-up, genial Irishman, of about five-and-forty, enters with a small spirit lamp in his hand, lighting his cigar and speaking through the puffs. In spite of all his eloquence, he says, he can't persuade Master Dick that it's his duty to marry the old lady. Dick enters laden with cigars and cigarette boxes.

There is a fire burning which Dick insisted upon having to give the card party the proper atmosphere, although it is a June evening. His friends find the fire a nuisance and vote not to notice it. They take their coats off and sit about the card table, beginning at once to recall old anecdotes and exploits connected with similar meetings in the past. The recollection of one adventure in Paris that followed upon their trying to borrow a pack of cards in their boarding-house makes them all sit back with beaming faces. The dealing of the cards is not getting on very well, and after the third attempt has resulted in a misdeal, the Doctor tells the Soldier Man that the lobster has flown to his head.

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Soldier Man [*smiling*]. Ah, the young 'uns of to-day don't know how to enjoy life as we know how to enjoy it. They're all so damned calculatory.

Dick. No such word.

S. Man. You know what I mean. We, Dickie, you and I, never stopped in the old days to turn things over in our minds and grow gray over counting the chances of what would or wouldn't happen. We went slap at everything, like the healthy young devils we were.

Waddles. Are.

All. Are, of course.

S. Man. And if we got our ears boxed—damme—it did us good—and—er—if we *didn't* get our ears boxed—well——

Dick [*cheerfully speaking for him*]. Damme, that did us good, too.

General Chorus [*cheerfully*]. So it did, of course it did.

Doctor. Ah, we are a merry Trinity.

Wad. [*quickly*]. Quadrity? Don't forget *me*, if you please.

S. Man. Ah, Waddy, you're not an original member—you grew on to it later.

Dick. You did—you plump little parasite.

Doc. It was three years later you threw yourself in on us, Waddy dear.

Wad. [*gloomy*]. I know it was. But, oh, after all these years don't you think it would be more gentlemanly of you three to forget your blessed Trinity, and start friends level?

S. Man. Damme! I've misdealt again.

Doc. It must be the lobster—it couldn't be the wine.

Dick. Here, I'll have a go this time.

S. Man. [*leaning back in his chair and stretching his long legs*]. Remember that night in Boulogne when we——

Dick [*gravely*]. Ought we to discuss that before Waddles—he's very young.

Doc. And very immature.

Wad. It is my birthday. I won't keep on being got at, and my glass has been empty for ages.

Dick [*rising quickly*]. My dear Waddy, I'm awfully sorry. I left the drinks in the dining-room. You deal on where I left off—oh—where did I leave off—never mind,

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go on where I did. I don't know, a card or two more or less won't make much difference at this time of night.

During the pause that follows the Doctor's roving eye falls on a picture of Phyllis and he asks the others why none of them had the chance of meeting such an angel when they were the Imp's age. Dick returns with refreshments and they at last begin to play their hands. Dick regrets the absence of the Imp whose advice at cards is invaluable. After a few minutes he discovers he has only twelve cards. They are all rather sick of dealing but try it again.

They begin to question Dick as to why he has given up his fishing and keeping a riding horse, and cut down his expenses in other ways. They suspect that he is letting the Imp run away with all the spare cash. They accuse Dick with one accord of spoiling the boy, who does not even know that Dick is giving up all the fun he used to get out of life. Dick replies that he does not think the boy is turning out badly, and in fact that he is very proud of him.

When the Imp became the property of the Trinity he was only two years old. He has lived with Dick since that time, a period of nineteen years, with the tacit consent of the others. Each of them has contributed twenty-five pounds a year to the Imp's maintenance, but it strikes them that that cannot have gone very far toward paying for Dick's tutors and his school life at Harrow. Dick confesses that he has met all the boy's expenses himself and put the money supplied by their annual contributions to the Imp's account in the bank.

The Imp's father was a close friend of the Trinity and especially of Dick, and commended to them, on his deathbed, his boy who was already motherless. Dick reads aloud the letter from the Imp's father in which he asks his friend to look after his boy and make a man of him. Dick says he has done his best; perhaps he has made a fool of himself, but the others have done the same over the boy at various times. Finally he puts away the letter and has gone for more beverages, which seem to be required to enable them to go on with the game, when some one is heard at the front door.

There is a pause, and a moment later the door from the

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hall opens and the Imp peers in. He is surprised at the sight of the Trinity but smiles at them a little vacantly. They glare at him in dismay, for he begins to speak very thickly, and tells them he has been spending the evening with his fiancée. In reply to their astonished, indignant exclamations he says he does not refer to Phyllis, but some one else whom he is keeping back for a bit. Her friends have made him drink heaps of things all mixed up together to see if he was a man. He showed them that he was, of course, but would like very much to get to bed. They facilitate this purpose while detaining Dick in the pantry.

When Dick finally gets into the room, after dropping and breaking a bottle of whiskey in his efforts to push through the door, the Imp is safely out of the way. The party settle down again about the table, and an allusion to Waddles' forty-seventh birthday reminds them of Thackeray's poem, "In the Brave Days when I Was Twenty-one." Dick recites the poem, the three others waving their glasses and chiming in cheerily with the refrain:

> With pensive eyes the little room I view
> Where in my youth I weathered it so long
> With a wild mistress, a staunch friend or two,
> And a light heart, still bursting into song.
> Making a mock of Life and all its cares
> Rich in the glory of my rising sun,
> Lightly I vaulted up four pair of stairs,
> In the brave days when I was twenty-one.
>
> To dream long dreams of beauty, love, and power,
> From founts of hope that never will out-run,
> To drain all life's quintessence in an hour,
> Give me the days when I was twenty-one.

[*And as he finishes he lifts his glass.*]

A toast, boys, a toast—all standing! [*They all rise.*] Good luck and long life to the Trinity.

Wad. [*fiercely*]. Quadrity!

Omnes [*raising glasses*]. Quadrity!

They drink; as they are doing so, the door softly opens and Phyllis looks in, smiling.

Phyl. [*softly*]. Good-night!

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All the men wheel round toward her and echo.

Omnes. Good-night!

There is a slight pause, no one moves and she kisses her hand; they all gravely kiss theirs to her, and she softly closes the door and disappears—there is another pause, and a half-sigh escapes from all the men as they stand looking at the door.

Dick [*tenderly*]. Bless her. [*Then, with a change of tone.*] Come along. I'm sure it's my turn to deal.

They all go back to the card table and sit down.

Dick, Phyllis, Mrs. Ericson, and Waddles are just finishing breakfast next morning when Dick asks why the Imp is not down. Not long after the Imp puts in an appearance, but he has little desire for food. Presently he is left alone with Waddles and makes a feeble attempt to smoke a cigarette. Waddles rebukes the Imp for referring to Colonel Grahame and himself as chaps. The Imp has thrown away his first cigarette and now lights another.

Sir Horace. You'll be sick, sir—throw it away. The Colonel has often expressed to me the deep regret with which he has noticed the growing disrespect that the young men of to-day have for their elders.

Imp [*quietly*]. I don't think any one would have occasion to say that if all our elders were like you four chaps.

[*A pause.*]

Sir H. [*completely mollified*]. Give me one of your cigarettes. [*The* IMP *hands him his case.*] Now, then, what's all this about this woman?

Imp [*innocently*]. What woman?

Sir H. [*with scorn*]. Your disreputable fiancée.

Imp [*with an affectation of surprise*]. Phyllis?

Sir H. [*jumping out of his chair*]. How dare you, sir?

Imp. Isn't Phyllis my fiancée?

Sir H. She is, sir.

Imp. Then, what do you mean by calling her disreputable? I don't think it's right to speak of your friends behind their backs in the way you do.

Sir H. I do not.

Imp. You said the Colonel wasn't a good sort.

Sir H. No such thing.

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Imp. And now you tell me Phyllis is disreputable.

Sir H. How dare you?

Imp. I shall have to ask you to prove your statement.

Sir H. I meant the woman you're keeping back—the one you're going to surprise us with. Tell me all about her.

Imp [*gravely*]. Really, Sir Horace—gentlemen do not discuss their little affairs de cœur with each other after breakfast—not good form.

Waddles counsels telling Dick all about this affair, but the Imp says he cannot do so yet. At last Waddles suggests taking a brisk walk down to his club, having a brandy and soda, and talking the affair over like men. Waddles takes the Imp's arm and they go out. As they do so Dick and Phyllis enter.

Dick [*sitting down, resignedly*]. Well, I'm ready to hear the rest now.

Phyl. It's no good making a joke of it—you know it's true.

Dick. Well, say it is. I'm living beyond my means.

Phyl. No, you're not—we're living beyond your means—look at the money you squander on me—look at the money you squander on mother—look at the money you squander on the Imp—look at his clothes, look at my clothes—then look at your own old things, it's perfectly disgraceful—and then, Colonel Grahame tells me you used to have a little shooting in Scotland, and since you've supported us you've had to give it up—so with your horse and everything else—it's all for other people—never anything for yourself.

Dick. That's where you're all wrong—it's all for myself. I'm very fond of your mother. I love the Imp—and—I—[*a pause; he looks up and meets her eye*]—have the greatest respect for you—so, when I see those that I'm fond of, those I love, and those I respect, all happy and contented, I puff myself up with righteous pride and wouldn't change places with the Emperor of Germany.

Phyl. Dick, why do you respect me?

Dick [*bluntly*]. I don't know.

Phyl. It's very unkind of you, I consider.

Phyllis says she is the kind of woman who loves to bow down before her husband and beg him to put his heel

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upon her neck. She longs to have the Imp show his power and grind her beneath an iron heel of authority. Dick doesn't think the Imp would ever do a thing like that, although, of course, he will be master in his own house. She replies that she and the Imp will chat it over some day and doubtless come to a decision. She thinks she must try to do something that will make Dick not respect her quite so much; couldn't he give up respecting her so fearfully?

Dick. Well—I—er—it isn't a thing one can do all at once, is it? You'd have to—sort of—give me a lead, you know.

Phyl. Would I—oh, yes, I suppose that is the best way—well, suppose I do this—I put this arm round your shoulder, so—[*she is standing behind his chair*]—and then I lean my cheek against the back of your head sympathetically, like this—how does that feel?

Dick. Feels as if I was going to be electrocuted.

Phyl. Oh!

Dick. You mustn't ruffle my hair, you know, coz the Soldier Man's coming to lunch, and—if—everybody's hair isn't smarmy he loses his appetite.

Phyl. Oh, bother the Colonel—let's talk about ourselves. Dick, what is the thing you wish for most in the world?

Dick. To see——

Phyl. Don't say it—— [*Quickly.*] I know exactly what you're going to say. [*And with a choke she moves quickly from him and goes up to the window.*]

She knows that he was going to say that he wants to see her and the Imp happily married. It is the thing she wished for most, she declares solemnly, and if anything happened to prevent it she should just fade away from grief. But, she asks, were he in the Imp's place, would he not get a little tired of her sometimes? He protests that he would not even a little.

Phyl. Ah—but you haven't ever pictured yourself in the Imp's place.

Dick [*softly, as if to himself*]. Yes, I have often.

Phyl. [*rising and looking him straight in the eyes*]. Have you—pictured yourself married to me—oh, Dick! [*Then tenderly.*] Was it nice?

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Dick [*with a laugh*]. Here—here—here—come along now—fiancées! We've chatted enough nonsense for one morning.

Mrs. Ericson has found a letter on the floor of the hall and shows it to Phyllis privately. She accidentally read a little of it in smoothing it out to see to whom it belonged, and what she saw shocked her so that she read the whole thing over two or three times. It is a woman's letter, addressed to "Dick." It appears that Dick is making arrangements to get married and does not want any of them to know. Of course he won't want them with him any more. After all they have done for Dick, she thinks he might have been more open with them. Judging by the letter, they must be very much in love with each other.

Phyllis takes the letter and fights against her desire to read it. Eventually she gives way, and with a little gasp skims through it hurriedly. Then she turns her horrified gaze and meets her mother's eyes. What sort of a woman could have written the letter, she asks. Mrs. Ericson thinks it must be a foreigner. Phyllis is staring into space when Dick enters. Without turning to him or looking at him, Phyllis holds out the letter saying that he dropped it.

Having read the letter, Dick folds it and puts it in his pocket, looking steadily at Phyllis. Mrs. Ericson observes that if he is half as good a husband as he has been a friend, his wife will be a lucky woman. Phyllis hopes that he will be very happy—as happy as he deserves to be, only—she thinks he might have entrusted her with the secret. She thinks the woman's name, Kara Glynesk, is a pretty one. She believes she has seen it somewhere.

Dick. You may have—it's all over the walls and on most of the 'buses. She performs at the Garden Theatre.

Mrs. E. [*horrified*]. She performs!

Dick. You've seen the large scarlet picture of her on the walls, there's one on the boardings opposite.

Phyl. That woman! Oh, Dick! [*Then she recovers herself.*] I do hope that you'll both be very—very happy.

Dick. Oh, I expect it'll be all right. I daresay she is not as red as she's painted, you know.

Mrs. Ericson, who has preparations to make for entertaining seven at lunch, leaves the room rather stiffly, and

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Phyllis tells Dick that it is a terrible thing for a woman to have to acknowledge herself to be a failure.

Phyl. It was the dearest wish of my heart to be your true friend and—and—see how hopeless it has been.

Dick. Don't say that—oh, don't say that, you hurt me.

Phyl. Haven't *you* hurt *me?*

Dick. How? I—I didn't mean to.

Phyl. Of course I'm awfully glad you're going to get married. The Imp and I have often felt that the one drawback to our complete happiness was the fact that you'd be left so lonely. Now, of course—it's all splendid—but what hurts is that you didn't let me share your secret with you—that you didn't trust me. And all these years I've tried so hard to make you trust me—and see how miserably I have failed. [*A long pause. Then she says impulsively.*] Dick—Dick—I didn't mean to be a beast—I hope you'll be awfully happy—I do, indeed—I do, indeed.

The door opens and the Imp and Sir Horace reappear. The Imp looks about the hall before coming in. Sir Horace remarks that the Imp has behaved very strangely. They went out for a walk, and before they had gone a hundred yards he insisted on coming back at once, saying that he had forgotten his pocket handkerchief, or something equally infantile. Dick calls Waddles out to his study. Phyllis stands motionless for a moment, and then swiftly presses her hands to her temples, crying out that she won't believe it, that it can't be true.

The Imp enters in a great state of agitation, looking hurriedly about him. She watches his movements listlessly for a moment, then she asks if he has lost anything. He replies shortly that he has not. Suddenly a thought flashes into her face and she gasps.

Phyl. Richard—Dick! [*She springs to her feet, pointing at him.*] You!—you!—— Oh, you darling, you darling!

And, to his intense astonishment, she flings her arms round his neck and hugs him—laughing hysterically.

Imp. Here—good gracious! Hang it all, Phyllis, don't be an ass.

Phyl. [*half laughing, half crying*]. Isn't it like him. Oh, isn't it just like him?

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Imp. Like who?

Phyl. Nobody. Imp—Imp—you're a miserable—hopeless—immoral, horrid young man—but, oh, Imp, you darling—you've made me fearfully happy.

Imp [*gloomily*]. Have I? I—I suppose I have—[*a pause*]—that's the worst of it.

Phyl. What's that?

Imp. I—er—look here, Phyllis, it's no good going on like this, is it? I—I can't stand it, you know—it keeps me awake at nights thinking of it—and goodness knows, what with everything, I want all the sleep I can get just now.

Phyl. Beauty sleep?

Imp. Look here—I—that is—you and I—er—I mean it's no good beating about the bush, is it?

Phyl. I don't understand—I—Imp, what is it?—something terrible has happened, I see it in your face. Oh—Imp, don't, don't tell me anything has happened.

Imp. Well—you see it's this way. [*He stops awkwardly.*]

Phyl. [*with an assumption of terrified anticipation*]. Don't say any more just yet—give me time—you're a man—be—be very gentle with me, Imp—I—I'm only a weak, loving woman.

Imp [*with a gulp*]. Well, you see—when you and I—were engaged—we—well—we didn't know as much of the world as we do now—did we? [*A pause, she rises and faces him. Nervously.*] I say, Phyllis, don't look at a fellow like that—it's hard enough for me as it is, goodness knows.

Phyl. [*slowly*]. What is hard enough for you as it is?

Imp. Why, to have to tell a girl that's fond of you——[*He stops again.*]

Phyl. Don't say it, Mr. *Audaine*, I understand.

There is a long pause. Finally the Imp asks if she thinks any the worse of him. Somehow, she says ironically, she can't think at all. Everything seems dark. Her brain is numb. The Imp pleads for himself in an agonized way. He couldn't help himself. He struggled, but it was no use. She asks him brokenly if he loves some one else, says he must tell her everything, and promises not to faint. He replies that it is the most beautiful woman in the world.

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Phyl. Oh, Imp—what does beauty matter? Is she very—very good?

Imp. Er—of course she's good.

Phyl. Is she very—very religious—and domesticated?

Imp. I don't know about very religious or the other thing. But she's got glorious eyes. Oh, if you could only look into her eyes—you'd know how good she was then.

Phyl. Yes, I expect I should. I will not let the world know the—the heartaches I shall have to bear. I will be very brave, you shall take mother and me to call.

He stammers that it isn't quite definite yet. One has to make preparations before marrying. He is going to settle on her all he has. It was not she who required that, but a sort of business manager, as she calls him, rather a cad of a fellow, he thinks. The Imp rather fancies he is pretty well off, though of course Dick has told him nothing about that yet. He hasn't told Dick anything about his love affair, he says, for what could a fellow like Dick know about love. He adds that not one girl in a hundred would take the thing so well as Phyllis has.

Phyl. I feel it very deeply, Richard—but I show nothing, I—I am very proud; if—if—this blow should happen to change my nature—I—I—shall do something great—I—I'll go on the stage. My name shall be in every man's mouth, my photograph on every man's mantelpiece, my face in every shop window, and my figure in full upon every wall. I've got a tendency that way, I know, because, when a week ago an old man with a long brush and a pail pasted on the boarding opposite this window a poster of a glorious creature—an ideal woman with crimson limbs and flame-colored hair—something seemed to wake up inside me, and as I watched the figure standing boldly out limb by limb against a background of gauzy drapery—I realized how narrow was life's look-out for me. How could I hope to win and keep the love of an honest man—and now it has all come true. Oh, Imp, Imp, if years ago I had cast to the winds all petticoats and prudery I might have proved worthy of you now. But—but—as it is, I must school myself to think that all is for the best.

Imp. Well, of course, it is no good crying over spilt milk, is it, Phyl—and—and—it's awfully odd you should mention her—but—it—that's she——

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Phyl. [*looking up at him as if completely bewildered*]. She—— [*Then in an awed whisper.*] The one on the wall? [*He nods.*] Oh, Imp—she loves you?

Imp. Yes—it—it somehow takes my breath away when I think of it.

Phyl. [*after a pause*]. Oh, Richard, where will you be able to keep such a wonderful thing as that?

Imp. I haven't spoken to her about it yet—but I've been looking about for a flat.

Phyl. [*with a shudder*]. A flat! You couldn't—you couldn't—that would be terrible—don't you see? Can't you feel how terrible that would be?

Imp. Well—we must make a beginning somewhere—mustn't we?

Phyl. It seems such a waste to keep her in one flat.

Imp. She—she's a good deal more homely than you'd think she is from that picture you know.

Phyl. Ah?

The Imp remembers the letter. He came home on purpose to find it. She tells him that Dick has it, but at his horrified look assures him loftily that people with any sense of honor do not read other people's letters. There is a pause in the conversation as Dick enters. He asks the Imp to come into his study. Phyllis quickly interposes; she has something very important for the Imp to do; she tells him to go at once. With a grateful look at her he complies.

Dick goes to the window and stands looking out listlessly. Phyllis asks mischievously if the picture on the opposite wall is a good likeness. He catches her meaning, and with a groan pulls down the shade and leaves the window. She has no idea of letting up, in fact, she is only beginning, and remarks that she should have thought him the last man in the world who would fall in love with that sort of a woman.

Dick [*shortly*]. Oh.

Phyl. Yes—it only proves to me how right mother always is.

Dick. What do you mean?

Phyl. You see, mother having been married—knows a great deal about men.

Dick. Ah!

Phyl. And she isn't a bit surprised.

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Dick. Isn't she? I'm glad.

Phyl. No—she says the quiet, fair men are generally like that.

Dick. Like what?

Phyl. Oh—you know—easily attracted by—by pictures on the wall.

Dick. I didn't know your mother was so observant.

Poor old Dick seems to feel very wretched, Phyllis thinks. He says he has a headache. She is very sympathetic and coaxes him to tell her about his plans for the future with his wife to be. He groans a little more. Phyllis asks if the lady is really so very beautiful, and wonders if he loves her as much as she, Phyllis, loves the Imp, if it isn't wonderful being in love and if he doesn't glow all over with pride and happiness every time he sees the picture on the wall.

Dick. No, I don't, if you really want to know.

Phyl. Don't you? How odd. I should love to see a picture of the Imp on the wall—that size.

Dick. Would you?

Phyl. Yes, and every time I saw a crowd of ladies looking at it I should say to myself: look away, ladies, all that belongs to me. Just how you must feel when you see everybody—even the policeman, looking at *your* future wife's picture. Do you approve of the drapery being so—so far away?

Dick. No.

Phyl. I'm glad you don't, because I don't either.

Dick. Will you kindly be quiet? I'm not in the mood for this sort of talk.

Phyl. Dick!

Dick. Oh, run away, there's a dear—I've lots of things to think about.

Phyl. You've lost your temper.

Dick. I daresay I have.

Phyl. Well, as you've lost your temper and practically told me to leave the room—I won't try to be nice to you any more.

Dick. That's a good thing.

Phyl. Is it? And I'll tell the truth to you now: I think it's disgusting your being in love with a woman like that.

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NAT GOODWIN AS DICK CAREWE AND MAXINE ELLIOTT AS PHYLLIS ERICSON

Phyl. I know just how you must feel when you see everybody—even the policeman, looking at your future wife's picture. Do you approve of the drapery being so—so far away?

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Dick. I daresay.

Phyl. And if it had been any one I'd been really fond of——

Dick [*rising*]. If—if it had been the Imp?

Phyl. [*proudly*]. That's impossible, the Imp is engaged to me, but if it had been the Imp, even the Imp—no matter how much I loved him, I'd never have spoken to him again.

Dick. Would it break your heart never to speak to him again?

Phyl. That's a curious question for you to ask, considering that our marriage has been almost entirely arranged by you.

Dick [*sadly*]. Yes—yes—I know.

Phyl. I think it's rather mean to suggest to me of all people that the Imp *could* do such a thing.

Dick. I didn't.

Phyl. I'm in error again, I suppose, or my hearing must be defective.

Dick. Oh, do leave me alone.

Phyl. You won't be worried with me much longer. After I'm married and you're married, I don't suppose we shall see much of each other, for I don't think either the Imp or I would ever be likely to be very friendly with the red lady on the wall.

She doesn't mind telling him that her mother's worst suspicions are confirmed, and says that she supposes her mother's principles won't allow her to trespass on Dick's hospitality much longer. Dick thinks it is a pity that her mother didn't realize what a bad lot he was a year or two sooner. Having assured him that her mother knew but thought it unwise to throw out dirty water before getting in clean, Phyllis fears she has gone too far and tells him her mother never said that.

He is sitting listlessly, very tired, very dejected, looking at the pattern on the carpet. Phyllis goes to the door, turns, and stands looking lovingly at him for a moment, then, with a little happy silent laugh, she creeps quietly to the back of his chair, throws her arms around his neck, and kissing him gently, runs from the room. Dick cannot understand why she should act like that, and runs his fingers hopelessly through his hair.

Waddles comes in from the study, and the Doctor and

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Colonel Grahame arrive a few minutes later. Dick shows them the letter that was found in the hall. They ask what sort of a looking woman she is. Dick raises the shade and tells them to look at the poster on the opposite wall. The Soldier Man exclaims the "Firefly!" by all that's damnable. He adds that she is one of the most notorious. Dick explains that Mrs. Ericson found the letter and handed it on to him after she and Phyllis had read it, and says that Mrs. Ericson and Phyllis think that the lady is in love with him. He assures them it would break Phyllis's heart to know it was the Imp. Under the circumstances, Waddles points out, the Imp not loving Phyllis, they ought not to be married, but Dick insists that the Imp really does love Phyllis.

Motioning toward the poster, Dick reminds them that it is only the Imp's youth. Every one goes through the phase, or at least so he is told. When the Imp finds out what it is worth he will sicken of it, marry, and settle down. The Doctor, also with a gesture toward the picture, says he does not think that sort of thing is a necessary part of a young man's education, that it won't do him any good. The door opens and the Imp enters quietly. He closes the door behind him, glances at the four men, and comes slowly down into the room. He finds they are all very solemn, and asks if they are talking about him. He has dropped a letter and wants to know if any one has found it.

The Imp is so astonished and affronted when Dick gives him the letter and says he has read it that he will not listen to a word of advice. There comes a time in every man's life, he says bitterly, when his own judgment is of greater use to him than other people's. Waddles asks if the Imp knows what people say about Kara Glynesk. The Imp retorts that they can say what they please; it means nothing to him.

Nothing in this life is ever entirely one's own affair, Dick tells him; nobody can say he stands alone; every step he takes in life reacts upon his surroundings. Dick urges the Imp to consider their opinions. They will talk it over and hammer it out amongst them.

Dick. Your father—the dearest, bravest, truest chap that ever stepped in shoe leather—gave you into our keeping when you were so high—we swore to make you

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worthy of him—and we're going to try to keep our word.

Imp. Is it making me worthy of him to try and make me break my promise to a woman?

S. Man [*quietly*]. Which woman—which promise, you have given two.

The shot goes home. The Imp looks at him for a moment, then turns away and leans his head against his arms on the mantelpiece. After a pause he says brokenly that they can't ask him to marry a woman he does not love. Finally he grows very angry when Colonel Grahame says he does not think that the Firefly has ever before been approached with such great ceremony as an offer of marriage. The Imp leaves in a rage, telling Dick he will never come back. Dick's last word is to wish him good luck.

The Soldier Man does not approve of this wish. His opinion is that the Firefly will marry the boy, spend his money, and then leave him for the next comer. She is to be bought as one buys a flower, he declares. If that is the case, Dick returns, it is he who will buy her; she shan't wreck the Imp's life. If the price is high, they must stand by him. They pledge themselves to see him through.

The Athenian Club, with its garish decorations, blaze of light, and rakish habituées, affords a natural setting for the Firefly. At midnight its precincts begin to show signs of life. The large hall, which serves as a lounging-room, is the scene of constant passing between the dancing-room, where an orchestra is playing, the bar, the stairway, and a smaller hall at the back at the end of which are heavily curtained doors leading to the street.

This farther hall is on a higher level than the big hall, connecting with it by three heavily carpeted steps. The bar is at one side of these steps, and several members of the club are lounging at it. Men as they enter leave their hats and coats with attendants in the small hall, but lady members enter the big hall and go upstairs to put down their wraps.

David Hirsch, a Jew stockbroker of about forty, a well-fed, powerful looking man, is lounging on a sofa near the foot of the staircase, smoking a cigar in a large and elaborate holder. On a marble-topped table at his side is the remainder of a small bottle of champagne. At the

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ringing of an electric bell the doorkeeper draws aside the curtains, opens the outer door, and admits three smart young men about town. Four girls come in without escorts and go up the stairs.

One of the young men is Lord Dungelt. He points out Hirsch to a companion as a man who has spent two fortunes on the Firefly and will send a third after them if he is lucky enough to make it. Hermont and Brundall, two other former wooers of Kara Glynesk, drawn by some bond of sympathy, gravitate toward Hirsch's lounge and sit down on each side of him.

Knots of men and girls gather here and there and there is a good deal of chatter, broken by bursts of laughter and familiar greetings. In the midst of the babble a tall, pale woman in a black gown, beautifully cut but somewhat out of date, sweeps down the room followed by a little shrivelled up old man. She bows haughtily to Lord Dungelt and is passing when he speaks. He introduces her as Mrs. Gordon to one of his friends to whom, he says, he is showing a little of life. Mrs. Gordon replies sadly that he is showing him death.

When she has passed on Dungelt relates that she was the wife of an army officer who drank pretty hard. She was a beautiful girl and the men were crazy about her. Finally she ran away with a young officer. That didn't last long. Now they say she drinks like a fish.

Hermont is telling Hirsch that he knows Hirsch has been making money, that in fact the Firefly showed him a letter in which Hirsch told her about it. Brundall assures Hirsch that his good fortune won't help him, as the Firefly has a new game on: she is going to be married. Hirsch starts up, knocking over his wineglass and breaking it. To his intense relief he learns that the rival they allude to is Audaine, who hasn't sixpence, he knows, and, as he says, can't get many of them from his friend Dick Carewe, the barrister.

The other two men are perfectly well aware of that. For that very reason they told the Firefly that the young man would come into a great fortune. It was a trick to pay off old scores. But now, says Hermont, there is a new factor to be dealt with, an unknown man who has offered the Firefly a thousand pounds for consent to link her name

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with his for a month. He merely wishes to have the Firefly proclaim him to her set as his dearest friend. Hirsch exclaims excitedly that he will put a stop to this tomfoolery. He says he has taught Kara that he is her master, and when a woman has learned that lesson thoroughly she never forgets it.

Shortly after the front door admits Colonel Grahame, Sir Horace Plumely, and Dick. They are all in evening dress. Leaving their hats and coats, they come to the steps of the larger room. For a second or two the four of them stand looking at the scene before them. The band is playing a waltz in the dancing-room and groups of men and women in various stages of merriment are passing from the stairs to the supper-room and to the dancing-room.

Hermont is asking Hirsch if he is going to make a scene. Hirsch's reply is that Kara is going to Monte Carlo with him in the morning. Then he is going to make a scene, Hermont concludes, and he goes upstairs to have some supper. Colonel Grahame has learned from the doorkeeper that the Firefly is not at the club. Waddles is delighted to have leisure to go through the rooms and look about. Colonel Grahame catches sight of a woman he knows, one whose husband was in his regiment. It is Mrs. Gordon. He is about to go to her, but Dick gives him a shake and asks why he should put the lady to pain. The Colonel agrees that Dick is right. He says it was all the man's fault that his wife has come to this. Dick wonders how the Imp ever found his way into such a haunt.

The Doctor is just remarking that they would do well to keep an eye on Waddles when at that very moment the plump baronet darts forward excitedly, picks up a fan for a lady, and goes upstairs with her. The Doctor starts after him, but trips over a lady's gown and stops to apologize. She answers with an irresistible brogue, and when they have exchanged a few remarks about Ireland he starts up the stairs with her for the supper-room.

The electric bell rings, the front door is opened, and a woman enters and comes forward hurriedly. She is a magnificent creature, robed like a sunset. As she sweeps down the steps her eyes fall on David Hirsch. He springs to his feet. She lightly blows him a kiss, and with a laugh

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turns and sweeps upstairs, remarking over her shoulder that she is looking for some one else.

The Colonel tells Dick the woman is the Firefly. She carries death in her wings, he says. Dick is amazed at her beauty. The Colonel reminds him that the thousand pounds in banknotes which Dick has in his pocket make him her lord and master. Dick notices that Hirsch is eying him.

Hughie Hermont and Wallis Brundall return to the room just as the Firefly is coming downstairs. They face her with affected nonchalance as she comes up to them and hisses through her teeth.

Kara Do you know what you are—yes, the pair of you?

Hughie. Liars?

Wallis. Do tell us what we've done.

Kara. You know. You think you've both been clever —you will find your joke a poor one before I've done. He has told me everything—he has nothing—nothing whatever. Oh, I don't blame him—the young fool is in love with me—lies were his only chance, but if the power is ever given me to repay you two, I'll flay you for your joke—I'll flay you! You can remember that.

Dick comes forward quietly. There is a pause and he bows.

Dick. I beg your pardon. You sent for me?

Kara [*looking at him in wonderment*]. Are you the fool?

Dick. I am what you choose to call me.

Hughie and Wallis, told by Kara that their presence is not desired, retire discreetly to the bar. She stares in amusement at Dick.

Kara. I pictured a different sort of man. [DICK *inclines his head a little.*] A very old man. [*A pause.*] Are you sane?

Dick. Perfectly.

Kara. Your proposition is odd, isn't it?

Dick. I suppose it is.

Kara. I see through it, you know. I see through most things.

Dick. I congratulate you.

Kara. You would not give me your word of honor that

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you will—never desire to expand the conditions of your offer.

Dick. I will give you my word of honor now.

Kara. Have you the thousand with you?

He gives her the notes. She imagines that he is trying to appeal to her curiosity and arouse her interest in him. Finally she asks if he would like to seal the bargain, but draws back at his look. Then she asks what security he has that she will earn the money.

Dick. Your sense of honor.

Kara [*amazed*]. Is that meant for a joke?

She thanks him gravely enough for his display of confidence. Assuring her that they have met for the first and last time, he says good-bye. He rejoins Colonel Grahame in a distant corner and tells him they can go now. The Colonel replies that they must not leave the Doctor and Waddles behind. They go upstairs to find them.

Meanwhile Hirsch has come back. He informs Kara that fortune is with him again and that they are going south the next day. She retorts that they are not. She will not be ready to go for a month. Hirsch says he has waited eight months already. He is evidently bent on raising a big enough row to get his way.

The front door is opened and the Imp enters, haggard and worn. He is not in evening dress. At the same time Dick comes downstairs followed by his three friends, and all at once, as if at a signal, the room seems to fill with couples passing one way and another. Kara has just told Hirsch that she is under an obligation to Dick Carewe.

Hirsch. He has nothing.

Kara. That's my affair.

Hirsch. You love him——

Kara. What if I do?

Hirsch. The devil! [*He advances a step menacingly.*]

Kara [*moving quickly to* Dick *in terror*]. Help me!

The Imp springs between Kara and Hirsch, raising his hand as if to strike. Dick seizes him and whirls him out of the way.

Dick. Go home. This is my quarrel.

Imp [*struggling*]. Let go! It is mine!

Dick [*in a whisper*]. Fool—she's my mistress.

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Imp. Liar! She's my wife!

An excited crowd have gathered about. The Colonel raises his arms and silences them. Dick stares wild-eyed at the boy. Then he turns to Kara and asks if that is true. She replies that it is.

Imp [*in a voice shaken by passion, and still facing* DICK]. Tell them you have lied.

Dick [*very slowly*]. I've lied—I beg your pardon.

Imp [*turning imploringly to* KARA]. Kara!

She glares at him stonily. His head droops wearily under her eyes. She gives a little laugh and turns to Hirsch, who hands her cloak and takes her out to a carriage. Dick moves falteringly toward the Imp and holds out his arms.

Dick [*brokenly*]. Oh, my boy—my boy!

The Imp looks at Dick for an instant, and then, with a hard laugh, says, "Never again! You've killed it!" He turns from him and rushes out of the club. Dick stands looking hopelessly after him. He repeats the boy's words in a whisper.

Dick. You've killed it—why—ever since he was so high I've—— "Never again." He doesn't mean it—he—he can't mean it.

The Trinity move a little toward him, awed by the agony written on his face.

Colonel [*tenderly*]. Dick—Dick, old man.

Dick [*chokingly*]. Don't—don't—not now.

He turns slowly and walks with stumbling feet into the outer hall. The servants give him his hat and coat, and open the door. He goes out into the darkness after the boy. His three friends stand looking after him helplessly at the sight of his pain.

An hour after these happenings at the Athenian Club neither Dick nor the Imp has returned home. Mrs. Ericson, who has been sitting up with Phyllis, waiting for them, now decides to go to bed. Finally Phyllis hears steps outside and thinks they have arrived. It is Sir Horace, the Doctor, and Colonel Grahame who come in. They affect surprise at not finding Dick there. Phyllis notices their embarrassment and tells them that the Imp wrote her he had been married, he asked her not to tell Dick, as he

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wished to do so himself, and besides, she thought Dick had heard from Kara Glynesk.

How Dick went to buy off the Firefly, only to find that he was too late, and the Imp's discovery that his marriage was a mistake, is recounted by the Colonel, who adds that the fickle Firefly has already transferred her affections to some one else. Phyllis gathers that the Imp quarrelled with Dick and is greatly distressed to think how hard it must be for him. She goes to the window and leaning against the curtains has a quiet sob all to herself. The three men look at each other. The Doctor whispers that it is Dick whom she loves after all. Waddles gasps that he is right, and says they were fools not to have seen it.

The Doctor asks Phyllis to try to comfort Dick when he comes. If there was only some sweet woman who loved him, he says, who could take his tired head upon her heart and tell him not to grieve, that would do him good he's thinking. Suddenly she goes to the door and listens. She recognizes Dick's step outside. The Trinity leave her hurriedly. The outer door is opened with a latchkey and Dick comes wearily in. Throwing down his hat and coat on a chair, he stands for a moment lost in his thoughts, and then goes to the desk and takes out the old letter from the Imp's father. Phyllis steals up quietly and puts her hand tenderly on his shoulder.

She knew he would be tired and thought he might be lonely, she tells him, so she wanted to be with him if he would let her. And then she says that she was glad to learn that the Imp didn't love her, as she did not love him. To their surprise the Imp comes in. Phyllis leaves him with Dick.

Imp [*bitterly*]. When a man arranges to lie away a woman's reputation to her husband he shouldn't be surprised if the husband has a word to say on the subject.

Dick looks at him, then says slowly.

Dick. I knew nothing of the marriage. What I did, I did for your sake.

Imp. Thank you very much.

Dick. I don't think you were wise to come here to-night—we—we can't see things clearly yet. You'd better go; come back to-morrow, perhaps then you will be able to understand.

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Imp. Oh, I quite understand now. I've learnt my lesson pretty thoroughly, thanks to you all. A woman, even a man's wife, is a thing to be bought and sold. If you've taught me nothing else, Dick, you've taught me that.

Dick. I've never taught you anything that wasn't true. No woman worthy of the name is to be bought.

Imp. Ah, I know 'em now—you don't. Who was the chap who said every woman was at heart a wrong 'un? He knew life. It's only the accident of birth and circumstances. Why, I daresay Phyllis——

Dick [*sternly*]. Stop there! [*Then very quietly.*] You'd better go, we are neither of us in a fit state to talk this matter over. We'd say what we didn't mean, and—and I might get angry with you. [*A pause.*] I have asked your pardon for my share in this; at the same time, I must ask you to remember that I did what I thought was right.

Imp. Our views of right and wrong differ.

Dick [*gently*]. They may to-night. I'm sure they won't to-morrow. [*He goes to the door and opens it.*]

Imp [*hotly*]. I'm not going yet. There's a good deal I've got to say to you.

Dick. And a good deal I've got to say to you, but not to-night.

Imp [*raising his voice*]. I will——

Dick. Hush! I said not to-night.

Imp [*stamping*]. I will know the truth of this damned conspiracy against me.

Dick. Stop!

Imp. It has been a conspiracy, and you know it. What were you all at the club for?

Dick [*quietly*]. I shall expect you in the morning.

Imp [*getting beyond himself, faces* DICK *in a rage*]. Tell me now.

Dick. I shall expect you in the morning.

Imp [*lifting his hand to strike*]. You—you——

Dick seizes his arm and holds him for an instant as in a vice, then lets him go and speaks gently.

Dick. That would have been a pity, wouldn't it?

There is a long pause. Dick takes a letter from the desk.

Dick. This is your father's letter, written to me when he lay dying, and you were a little child; in it he asks me

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to try and take his place. I have tried—you are of age now—you need me no longer.

Dick tears the letter into two pieces. The Imp is sitting on the sofa, his head buried in his hands. A knock is heard at the outside door. A cabman has brought a note for Dick. It is from Kara Glynesk, and Dick asks the Imp if he shall read it aloud. The Imp tells him to do so, as she cannot write harder things than she has said.

Dick. "I have learnt from Mr. Hirsch that you are the young man's guardian, so I see now the reason of our compact. I am sorry you were too late, for his, for my own, and for your sake. However, don't worry, your young friend will have no difficulty in obtaining his freedom. I return your check for two reasons: one is, I'm sure Hirsch wouldn't approve of my receiving such a present even from my husband's guardian, the other is I don't want you to think you are the only fool in the world. I'll send you some roses from Monte Carlo."

After a pause Dick looks at the Imp, who laughs and goes up into the window where he stands staring into the darkness. Then he speaks without turning.

Imp. When I told her that I should kill him she laughed and said, "Very well; but when you are hanged there'll be nobody left to deal with his successors." That seemed logical, so I came away and left him to eat his supper.

The Imp says he will go now, and starts toward the door. Then he stops and his voice is husky as he speaks again.

Imp. You—you might ask me to stay here.

Dick [*gladly*]. Would you?

Imp. Oh, Dick!

He breaks down utterly as Dick, deeply moved, catches him in his arms.

Dick [*half-laughing, half-sobbing*]. Come, come, it'll all dry straight, we will work it through together, old man, shoulder to shoulder, as we used to be.

Imp. All that I've said, just now, I didn't mean it, I didn't, indeed. I've been a brute to you, Dick, but I didn't mean to be.

Dick. I know, old man—bless you, I know. You had to work it off on somebody, and I was nearest.

Imp [*passionately*]. Dick—Dick! I'd like to get out

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of this country just a bit. I must, I must—can't I go? There's always a war somewhere—I'd like to fight.

Dick. Why not? Get along out and show 'em you're your father's boy, our boy. Then come back all over Victoria crosses and things, and—and the Trinity shall entertain you at a banquet. That's right, boy, buck up. The world's a damned hard fight, you've had the first knock, a stiff 'un, right under the jaw, but you're up again, old son, and the fight is yours to win if you only choose.

Imp. I choose.

Dick wrings his outstretched hand. As soon as the Imp has gone to his room Dick sees the pieces of the letter and picks them up. He is putting them in the desk when Phyllis, who has heard the Imp's door close, comes back into the room.

He starts to ask her a question but breaks off. Divining his meaning, she volunteers that she was never in love with the Imp; the other day when he would keep on saying things to her about the Imp, and how happy she ought to be, she teased him because she wasn't happy. She is much happier now—because she needn't marry the Imp—because she is free.

Dick. Oh, I wish I was ten years younger.

Phyl. I don't.

Dick [*eagerly*]. Don't you? [*He moves to her.*] Oh, Phyllis!

She meets his eye and he backs off again. He says she really ought to go to bed. It is quite late. Then, hesitantly, he tells her he never dared tell any one something, not even himself, much less her. After a pause she asks him what. At this he loses courage and tells her it is striking two. Before she reaches the door he asks her not to go just yet.

Dick. I'm not usually such a fool—but somehow this seems so fearfully serious. I—I—you're a young girl. I'm forty. It isn't fair, is it? I mean, I daresay, you would out of the kindness of your heart, but—but—— No, I'm a fool, everything's better as it is. Good-night, dear.

He turns from her and goes to the table—she stands looking at him for a moment, then says softly.

Phyl. You don't mean to say good-night, Dick, like

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that. Good-night. [*She comes to him with her hands outstretched—their eyes meet, the touch of her hands conquers him.*]

Dick. I must tell you—— [*A long pause, and he says in a whisper almost.*] I love you!

Phyl. [*simply*]. I love you, too, Dick.

Dick. You love me!

Phyl. I've always loved you, but you didn't seem to care.

Dick [*dazed*]. You love me!

Phyl. I love you.

There is a silence, and then he kisses her—there is another silence—then he says with a long sigh.

Dick. I thought everything had ended. Everything is just beginning—you love me—say it again.

Phyl. Need I?

Dick. Yes, say it again.

Phyl. I love you.

Dick. You love me. [*A long pause—he kisses her—and whispers.*] Again!

Phyl. Again and always, I love you.

Dick. Then what's the matter with anything?

Phyl. Nothing.

Dick [*in a hushed whisper*]. Nobody must ever know.

Phyl. Why not?

Dick. I don't know—but—but—oh, they mustn't—say it again.

Phyl. Tell everybody—are you ashamed of me?

Dick. Ashamed! Here—hi! No, no, before they come, say it again—just in a whisper. I love you, it's the most beautiful thing I've ever heard. Phyllis, Phyllis, where have I been hiding myself all these years? You've opened out life to me.

Phyl. [*whispers*]. I love you.

Dick. But—but oh, I'm forty, dear.

Phyl. I love you.

Dick. I'm—I'm an old bachelor.

Phyl. I love you.

Dick [*with a cry of delight*]. Don't whisper it, shout it. We love each other, and we're going to be married. Let's tell 'em, let's tell 'em. Waddles, Miles, Doctor—what are they doing? How shall I tell 'em?

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Phyl. It's very easy.

Dick [*ruefully*]. Is it? Here, I've called 'em, you tell 'em—that's fair.

Waddles, the Doctor, and the Soldier Man enter hurriedly.

The Three. Old man——

Dick. The Imp's come home—and—and we're none of us to worry, because he's going to be a man.

The Three. Oh! [*Vaguely.*]

Dick. And—and—Phyllis has got something to say to you.

The three men, with instant comprehension, wheel round to Phyllis.

Colonel [*eagerly*]. Is it all right?

Phyl. [*smiling*]. Yes.

Col. Oh, my dear! [*And he takes her hands and kisses her fervently.*] It's our right.

He hands her to the Doctor, who does the same and hands her to Waddles, who follows suit.

The Three. Good luck to you—it—it—it's splendid.

Dick [*taking her*]. Yes, isn't it? Splendid.

Omnes. Kiss her, kiss her!

Dick. I'm not afraid. I—I did it all by myself just now. [*He kisses her.*]

Wad. Thank goodness it isn't a quadrity any longer—it's a quantity.

Omnes. It is—it is!

Wad. With a power to increase our number.

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THE ADMIRABLE CHRICHTON*

By Sir James M. Barrie

First played in London at the Duke of York's Theatre on November 4, 1902.

Argument: Lord Loam, a believer in the equality of man, starts on a voyage to distant parts of the earth accompanied by his three daughters, two young gentlemen, his butler, and a maidservant. His yacht is wrecked on an uninhabited island where the theory of equality is put to a practical test. Does nature justify the views of the peer, and, incidentally, are the castaways ultimately restored to civilization?

On the alert for a chance to make an epigram, Ernest Woolley, nephew of Lord Loam, enters one of the several reception rooms of Loam House in London and looks about him. As a young man about town he is habitually too busy over nothing. His eye falling upon a set of tea things he turns to Chrichton, the butler, with, "Tea cups! Life, Chrichton, is like a cup of tea: the more heartily we drink, the sooner we reach the dregs."

Two very languid girls, Lady Catherine, twenty, and Lady Agatha, two years younger, daughters of Lord Loam, enter the room and are followed presently by their sister, Lady Mary, a beautiful creature of twenty-two, whose natural hauteur is the fury and the envy of her sisters. She has been trying on engagement rings all the morning and is quite tired out. She has just become betrothed to Lord Brocklehurst.

The Earl of Loam, being a widower, is able to interfere in domestic concerns, and as a philanthropist he puts his advanced ideas into practice by requiring his daughters to receive the servants at monthly teas. The servants dis-

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like these occasions as heartily as the young ladies. One of the dread affairs takes place this very afternoon. Brocklehurst arrives, and may easily be seen to be nothing save for his rank. Another guest is Treherne, an almost negligible young clergyman, who is, however, a good cricketer and is thought by Lady Catherine to have a heavenly nose.

And now the moment has come when the servants must be shown in. For the time being they are to be the equals of their superiors, and if Lord Loam perceives one of his daughters condescending to them she will have to recite by way of punishment. Lord Loam inquires of Lord Brocklehurst if he can do anything—with a penny or a handkerchief, for instance. That young aristocrat is quite aghast. Lord Loam says that he shall call upon Ernest to say a few words—something bright and sparkling.

The servants are presented one by one to the family and guests, Mrs. Perkins, the housekeeper; Monsieur Fleury, the chef; Mr. Rolleston, Lord Loam's valet, Mr. Tompsett, the coachman, who shrinks visibly from the honors heaped upon him; Miss Fisher, Lady Mary's maid, a superb creature; the maids of the other young ladies; the footmen, and so on down to such odds and ends as pages and stable boys.

All this sort of thing is utterly opposed to Lord Brocklehurst's principles. Nevertheless, when his eye alights upon Miss Fisher, he remarks to Ernest that if he has to feed one of them that is the one. Ernest instantly thwarts his desire, telling Miss Fisher that she is too pretty, and Brocklehurst that his mother would not like it. He substitutes a kitchen girl of less incendiary attractions.

Meanwhile, Chrichton is explaining to Lady Mary why these gatherings go so much against the grain with him. They disturb the etiquette of servants' hall. After the last month's meeting the page boy called him Chrichton—and was dismissed. If it were not for the fact that the master holds a seat in the upper house, Chrichton should have felt compelled to give notice himself.

The divisions into classes are artificial, according to Lord Loam. If they were to return to nature, which is the aspiration of his life, all would be equal. Chrichton puts in that if he may be so bold as to contradict his lordship,

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the divisions are not artificial; they are the natural outcome of a civilized society; there must always be a master and servants in a civilized community.

The moment arrives for Lord Loam to make his monthly address to the servants. After expressing the noble wish that the barriers of society could be swept away, he announces that in less than forty-eight hours he and his daughters, Mr. Ernest, and Mr. Treherne, will have started in his yacht on a voyage to distant parts of the earth.

To exert active opposition to the excessive love of luxury prevailing at the present day, he has decided that on the voyage his daughters shall have but one maid between them. It has been his intention, he informs the servants, to conclude with some noble saying on which they may profitably ponder during his absence, and he has selected a proverb for the purpose. Hereupon he hesitates. Suddenly he grows pale and taps his forehead.

All fear that Lord Loam has forgotten the proverb. This is indeed too true, but he has not the sense to sit down. Lady Mary gives Chrichton the signal to dismiss the domestics. Mr. Treherne and Chrichton finally conduct Lord Loam from the room, still groping for the proverb as if in the air, and still looking "every inch a lord."

As none of the three ladies' maids will demean herself to such an extent as to wait on the three young ladies, Chrichton suggests that they take a young woman from the kitchen, the tweeny or *between* maid. It is she who helps the vegetable maid, conveying the dishes from the one end of the kitchen table, where they are placed by the cook, to the other end, where they enter into the charge of Thomas and John.

Lady Mary infers that Chrichton is "keeping company" with the tweeny. Chrichton is aghast at the thought. Butlers do not keep company. He is not engaged. The utmost he can say at present is that he has "cast a favorable eye." He admits that it will undoubtedly increase the young person's chances if she is a lady's maid. Tweeny, however, refuses to go when she learns that Chrichton is not to be on the yacht.

Still another difficulty presents itself: Lord Loam's valet will not accompany an expedition on which one

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maid is to attend to the wants of three young ladies. Lady Mary, however, discovers the solution. She is not so tactless as to propose outright to Chrichton that he shall become a valet, but makes an appeal that stirs him deeply by inquiring if he thinks it safe to let the master he loves go so far away while he has these dangerous views about equality.

When Chrichton has sacrificed himself Lady Agatha offers him her hand in gratitude. He is much shaken at the idea of a valet taking a lady's hand. She insists upon knowing why he feels his change to be so degrading. To him, he returns, the most beautiful thing in the world is a haughty, aristocratic English house, with every one kept in his place. He would feel no pleasure in being equal to her ladyship. It would be counterbalanced by the pain of feeling that Thomas and John were equal to him.

Lady Agatha reminds him that were they to return to nature, at least according to her father, they would all be equal. The first thing they should do under those circumstances, he believes, would be to elect a head when the same one might not be master.

Lady Agatha asks her eldest sister to be nicer to Chrichton, but that haughty lady continues to read a book without replying. As Lady Agatha wishes they could show their gratitude, Chrichton ventures to request that she will kindly show it by becoming more like Lady Mary. Disdain is what they like from their superiors.

The scene of this romance shifts to the shore of a desert isle in the Pacific, where Lord Loam's yacht was wrecked after voyaging for two months. A thick growth of bamboo shuts off the prospect. Chrichton and Treherne are building a hut. The ladies are huddled together against a rock, clothed in such garments as were ready to hand when the crash came on the coral reef. On an inverted bucket sits Ernest, who has been put in rather a good humor by writing an account of their misfortune.

The gallant behavior of the crew and dreadful sufferings of the survivors set forth, the chronicler comes to the fate of Lord Loam who, he writes, flung away his life in a gallant attempt to save a servant who had fallen overboard. It was Chrichton, actually, who jumped overboard to

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save Lord Loam, but Ernest explains that he is going to put the manuscript in a bottle and throw it into the sea. If it is ever picked up and printed in the English papers his version of the end of an English peer is more seemly. The tide is going out and they must not miss the post, he remarks, corking the bottle.

The unhappy young ladies fail to applaud this sally, and Ernest calls Chrichton from his work to inform him that the tide is a postman who comes twice a day for letters. Chrichton thanks him respectfully after a pause, and Ernest is a little disappointed in him. He and Agatha start off with the bottle. Lady Mary has a talk with Chrichton. She remarks rather contemptuously that Mr. Ernest does no work.

Chrichton [*cheerily*]. But he will, my lady.

Lady Mary. I doubt it.

Chri. [*confidently, but perhaps thoughtlessly*]. No work—no dinner—will make a great change in Mr. Ernest.

Lady M. No work—no dinner. When did you invent that rule, Chrichton?

Chri. [*loaded with bamboo*]. I didn't invent it, my lady, I seem to see it growing all over the island.

Lady M. [*disquieted*]. Chrichton, your manner strikes me as curious.

Chri. [*pained*]. I hope not, your ladyship.

Lady M. [*determined to have it out with him*]. You are not implying anything so unnatural, I presume, as that if I and my sisters don't work there will be no dinner for *us?*

Chri. [*brightly*]. If it is unnatural, my lady, that is the end of it.

Lady M. If? Now I understand. The perfect servant at home holds that we are all equal now. I see.

Chri. [*wounded to the quick*]. My lady, can you think one so inconsistent?

Lady M. That is it.

Chri. [*earnestly*]. My lady, I disbelieved in equality at home because it was against nature, and for that same reason I as utterly disbelieve in it on an island.

Lady M. [*relieved by his obvious sincerity*]. I apologize.

Chri. [*continuing unfortunately*]. There must always, my lady, be one to command and others to obey.

Lady M. [*satisfied*]. One to command, others to obey.

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Yes. [*Then suddenly she realizes that there may be a dire meaning in his confident words.*] Chrichton!

Chri. [*who has intended no dire meaning*]. What is it, my lady?

After a stare at him she hurries away.

Ernest and Lady Agatha come running back in great alarm and create a general panic by declaring that a tiger cat is at their heels. The grass is moving. It is coming. It comes. But it is no tiger cat. It is Lord Loam, very exhausted, crawling on his hands and knees. There is an affecting scene.

It is Ernest who reminds Chrichton that he is idling. Chrichton contemplates him without rancor, and then gets a pot which he hangs over the fire. Lord Loam gazes on the pot as young ladies are said to gaze on precious stones. He inquires, however, whether he is dreaming, or whether there is really a pot over the fire. He has been dreaming of a pot on a fire for two days. Quivering, he asks if there is anything in it. Ernest lifts the cover and lets him sniff.

Lady Mary fears that Ernest is going to try to lord it over the rest of them on the island and urges her father to assert his authority. Ernest, in fact, proves recalcitrant, flatly refusing the post of hunter. For a moment Lord Loam is nonplussed, but then it occurs to him to summon Chrichton. The butler says he has been considering Mr. Ernest's case. Mr. Ernest's epigrams have been particularly brilliant since they landed on the island, a spot where epigrams are not much use. He therefore most respectfully proposes that henceforth, every time Mr. Ernest favors them with an epigram, his head should be immersed in a bucket of cold spring water.

There is a terrible silence. Then Lord Loam says, "Serve him right." Ernest remarks that he should like to see his uncle try to do it. Chrichton explains further. His feeling is that at the next offence he should convey Mr. Ernest to a retired spot and there carry out the undertaking in as respectful a manner as is consistent with a thorough immersion.

Lady M. [*a ramrod*]. Father, you must not permit this; Ernest is your nephew.

Lord Loam [*with his hand to his brow*]. After all, he is

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my nephew, Chrichton; and as I am sure he now sees that I am a strong man——

Ernest [*foolishly in the circumstances*]. A strong man. You mean a stout man. You are one of mind to two of matter.

As he looks about for approval he perceives that no one has smiled. Chrichton, moreover, is turning up his sleeves. Fixing Ernest with his eye, he pronounces the one word "Come." Ernest, affecting bravado, rises and goes with Chrichton.

When Ernest reappears his hair is very wet. Lord Loam inquires if Chrichton has carried out his orders. Chrichton replies that he has.

Lord L. Well, well. This question of the leadership; what do you think now, Chrichton?

Chri. My lord, I feel it is a matter with which I have nothing to do.

Lord L. Excellent. Ha, Mary? That settles it, I think.

Lady M. It seems to, but—— I'm not sure.

Chri. It will settle itself naturally, my lord, without any interference from us. [*The reference to nature gives general dissatisfaction.*]

Lady M. Father!

Lord L. [*a little severely*]. It settled itself long ago, Chrichton, when I was born a peer, and you, for instance, were born a servant.

Chri. [*acquiescing*]. Yes, my lord, that was how it all came about quite naturally in England. We had nothing to do with it there, and we shall have as little to do with it here.

Treherne [*relieved*]. That's all right.

Lady M. [*determined to clinch the matter*]. One moment. In short, Chrichton, his lordship will continue to be our natural head.

Chri. I daresay, my lady, I daresay.

Catherine. But you must *know*.

Chri. Asking your pardon, my lady, one can't be sure—on an island. [*They look at each other uneasily.*]

Chrichton is evidently pained at the carelessness of Lord Loam in having left behind a hairpin which he saw on the beach. From that hairpin, he says, they could have made

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a needle; with that needle they could, out of skins, have sewn trousers—of which his lordship is in need; indeed they are all in need of them.

Lady M. [*suddenly self-conscious*]. All?

Chri. On an island, my lady.

Lady M. Father.

Chri. [*really more distressed by the prospect than she*]. My lady! If nature does not think them necessary, you may be sure she will not ask you to wear them. [*Shaking his head.*] But among all this undergrowth——

If Chrichton will not this moment say, "Down with nature," declares Lord Loam, then he may take a month's notice. He adds that Chrichton need not come to him for a character. Ernest, whose immersion has cleared his brain, reminds his uncle that they are on an island. Lord Loam says the only difference that makes is that Chrichton may go to some other part of the island.

The family need Chrichton so sorely that he refuses to desert them, and Lady Mary instantly replies that in that case they will leave him. Lord Loam directs Treherne and Ernest to get their things, but as the only things about are those which Chrichton has salvaged from the wreck at great personal peril they are conceded to belong to him, and the others depart empty handed.

Daylight is coming to an end. Chrichton perceives that the wind is blowing in the direction in which they have gone and takes the cover off the pot. He thinks nature will take the matter into her own hands. They are all hungry and the pot has come to a boil. He proceeds with his preparations for the night.

Now and then Chrichton stirs the pot. Finally the adventurers begin to creep back and squat about the fire. Lady Mary holds out to the last with grim determination.

In two years time the adventurers are established in a second house of more substantial construction than the first, and they enjoy many conveniences that the master has provided, including electric lights, for which the power is derived from a nearby stream.

Lord Loam goes by an island name exclusively now. "Daddy," they call him. He is enjoying life heartily as a handy man, dressed in skins, although when he dances

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and plays on an island-made concertina, singing a foolish song for Tweeny, she sends him about his business if it happens to be in working hours. She finds him of little use, but he is a bright, cheerful creature to have about the house, and is proud to work for such a master as Crichton.

Considerable change has come about in Ernest. He is laudably industrious and does not have to be dipped any more. Treherne is more like a cowboy than a clergyman. Ernest asks him if he still remembers how to perform the marriage ceremony. The master has already asked him the same question. Ernest thinks the master has noticed the love light in his eyes.

Shortly afterward, when Ernest goes down on his knees, it is to Tweeny. He wants to build a little house for her in a sunny glade. She is unresponsive. Even his promise not to stay around very much fails to win her. Lady Mary appears suddenly. Clad in skins and carrying a blowpipe and bow and arrows, she is a picture of youth and beauty. Over her shoulder is a fat buck, which she drops with a cry of triumph. Tweeny reproves her for not wiping her feet.

Catherine and Agatha, in manly attire, return with fish, and dispute whose turn it is to wait on the Gov'nor. Tweeny settles it by telling them that he wants Polly again.

The master comes in quietly, a book in his hand. His dress is not noticeably different from that of the others, but is more carefully cut. His face is grave, and perhaps too intellectual to pass as strictly handsome.

Lady Mary waits on him, closely watched through the kitchen slide by three jealous women. He asks if she has any followers on the island. She has not, but it is not because of want of asking. After the meal they fall into rather a confidential manner of talk for master and servant.

The master reminds her of a certain cold, haughty, insolent girl, Lady Mary Lasenby, and of one Chrichton, a butler. To her the past is unreal. Then he tells her he loves her and asks her to be his wife. She declares he is the most wonderful man in the world and that she is not afraid.

There is great festivity in the island home that night:

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singing, and dancing to the music of Daddy's concertina. Chrichton joins the others in a dignified manner, wearing a handsome robe that is rather suggestive of royalty. At a moment when the merrymaking is fast and furious they all stop abruptly as if turned to stone. They have heard the boom of a gun—a ship's gun. Daddy believes it is only a dream, the dream he has had many times.

The lights of the ship can be seen in the distance. They surmise that a boat had come to the shore for water, and that the gun was fired to recall it. Apparently the ship is going away again. Lady Mary says almost to herself she thinks she is glad. Chrichton says he will bring them back. He goes to an electric switch with which he can fire a number of beacons.

Lady M. [*faces him*]. Stop! Don't you see what it means?

Chri. [*firmly*]. It means that our life on the island has come to a natural end.

Chri. The old man—you saw what it means to him.

Lady M. But I am afraid.

Chri. [*adoringly*]. Dear Polly.

She tells him to let the ship go, but saying that he must play the game, he pulls the levers. Through the windows one of the beacons is seen flaring red a mile away. The others run in, some weeping with joy, others boisterous.

Lord Loam enters with a naval officer. The old life has come back to him. Not meaning to be cruel, he addresses Chrichton as a servant. All leave Chrichton except Lady Mary. She stretches out her arms to him and says she will never give him up. There is a salt smile on his face as he shakes his head to her. He calls her "my lady." She shudders and draws away from him.

In Lord Loam's London home many reminders of the island life are hung upon the walls and displayed in cases. Ernest has written a book about their adventures, and reviews of it have just appeared in the evening papers. He is looking them over with Lord Loam, and Ladies Catherine and Agatha. Chrichton comes in.

Ernest is just saying that the papers are guides that tell us what to do, and that then we don't do it. Chrichton goes to a case and takes out a bucket, and Ernest rises

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mechanically as if to follow him from the room. Lord Loam, in obvious discomfort, observes that he told Chrichton to take the thing away. The family feel much as if they were living over a volcano, not that they think Chrichton will divulge anything voluntarily, but fear that some one, perhaps Lady Brocklehurst, may question him adroitly.

There is one thing that Lady Mary insisted must be told to Lord Brocklehurst, who is still her fiancé. Lord Loam did not agree with her, but Lady Mary, feeling very strongly that the revelation was demanded by common decency, threatened to break her engagement unless it was made. Her father promised, accordingly, to enlighten the young man, and she thinks that he has done so, but up to the present moment he has not found the courage. Lord Brocklehurst arrives at the dinner hour and asks for a word alone with Lady Mary.

Lord Brocklehurst is strangely agitated. He opens the interview by saying somewhat ambiguously that she had been away for two years when "it" happened. She faces him courageously. Nevertheless, he declares "it" was utterly and absolutely inexcusable. Lady Mary becomes ice. He proceeds to explain that it was really the merest flirtation, and all because a boat he was on was late in reaching Calais. Her self-assurance is flooding back rapidly, and it is completely restored when at last she learns that he has not interviewed her father, and consequently does not know that she became Chrichton's fiancée on the island.

Lady M. George, who and what is this woman?

Lord Brocklehurst [*cowering*]. She was—she is—the shame of it—a lady's maid.

Lady M. [*properly horrified*]. A what?

Lord B. A lady's maid. A mere servant.

The lady's maid, moreover, was Fisher, Lady Mary's own maid, whom Brocklehurst met there when they were entertaining the servants. Lady Mary does not withhold her forgiveness. She even says she is relieved to know that he is not perfect.

Lady Brocklehurst is a little surprised to learn that her son came off so easily. When she hears that Lady Mary was relieved to find he was not perfect she pricks up

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her ears. She wonders if Mary is all they think her. They don't really know what happened on that island. Ernest's book may have suppressed a great deal. She reflects if she had been wrecked on an island she should probably have lied when she came back. She determines to question Chrichton, and tells George to watch whether he begins any of his answers with, "The fact is," which is usually the beginning of a lie.

No sooner has Chrichton responded to the bell than Catherine and Agatha enter the room. Treherne arrives soon after, and then Ernest. Catherine announces her engagement to the one and Agatha hers to the other. Lady Mary and Lord Loam now join the group, feeling happy and secure after a private talk upstairs. Lady Brocklehurst explains that she was about to ask Chrichton if the views they used to hold about equality were adopted on the island. Ernest starts to speak confidently with the words, "The fact is——" but noticing the expression of Lady Brocklehurst and her son he stops. Chrichton informs her ladyship that there was as little equality on the island as elsewhere.

Lady Brocklehurst. All the social distinctions were preserved?

Chri. As at home, my lady.

Lady B. The servants?

Chri. They had to keep their place.

Lady B. Wonderful. How was it managed?

She turns to Tweeny, whom she had sent for. Tweeny replies that it was all the Gov's doing. The family give themselves up for lost, but Chrichton explains that the master is usually referred to as the Gov in the regrettable slang of servants' hall. Lady Brocklehurst asks if Chrichton took his meals with the family. He replies that he dined apart, and she then inquires if Tweeny dined with Chrichton.

Tweeny [*scared*]. No, your ladyship.

Lady B. [*fastening on her*]. With whom?

Tweeny. I took my bit of supper with—with Daddy and Polly.

Ernest [*leaping into the breach*]. Dear old Daddy—he was our monkey.

Catherine recalls to Lady Mary what a sweet little

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parrot Polly was. Learning from Chrichton that the servants' teas were discontinued on the island, Lady Brocklehurst pounces on the fact as a clear proof that they were a mistake at home. Lord Loam admits it frankly. He abandons them. He even thinks of going over to the Tories.

All danger is not yet past. Lady Brocklehurst supposes there was a certain amount of sentimentalizing on the island. As she turns to Tweeny Ernest again says hurriedly, "The fact is——" but is checked as before.

Tweeny [*gasping*]. It was him—Mr. Ernest, your ladyship.

Lady B. [*counsel for the prosecution*]. With which lady?

Agatha. I have already told you, Lady Brocklehurst, that Ernest and I——

Lord Brocklehurst hopes his mother is ashamed of herself, and tells Chrichton to come to him if he ever wishes to change his place. Chrichton wishes to leave service as soon as Lord Loam is suited. He announces dinner, and Lady Mary stays behind a moment and impulsively holds out her hand. She wishes him every dear happiness, and then asks if he despises her.

Chri. Yes, my lady.

Lady M. You are the best man among us.

Chri. On an island, my lady, perhaps; but in England, no.

Lady M. Then there's something wrong with England?

Chri. My lady, not even from you can I listen to a word against England.

Lady M. Tell me one thing: you haven't lost your courage?

Chri. No, my lady.

She goes. He remains to lower the lights, but though he is alone his face is still inscrutable.

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RIDERS TO THE SEA*

By J. M. Synge

First played in Dublin at Molesworth Hall on February 25, 1904.

Argument: An old woman whose husband and five sons have been drowned at fishing tries to keep her last surviving son from putting to sea before a storm. He insists upon going, and she thinks she sees one of his dead brothers riding with him. Will the last son be drowned?

On an island off the west of Ireland, in a cottage kitchen, Cathleen, a girl of twenty, is making a cake. Nora, her younger sister, comes in softly and takes a bundle from under her shawl. In it are a shirt and stocking that were got off a drowned man in Donegal. The priest gave them to her to find out if they were her brother Michael's. Cathleen does not see how he would have gone that length of way to the far north.

If the things are not Michael's the girls will say nothing of them to their mother, for fear she will be getting her death with crying and lamenting. Nora asked the priest if he would stop Bartley from going with the horses to Galway fair, but the priest told her not to be afraid, for the Almighty God would not leave their mother destitute with no son living. Nora says the sea is bad already, with a great roaring in the west, and will get worse when the tide is turned to the wind.

They hear their mother moving about and hide the bundle in the turf loft before she comes in. The old woman sits down on a stool at the fire. She says that Bartley won't go this day with the wind rising from the south and west. Bartley comes in. He tells them he

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must sail on this boat, as there will be no other for two weeks or more, and he has heard it said that the fair will be a good one for horses.

Maurya. It's a hard thing they'll be saying below if the body is washed up and there's no man in it to make the coffin, and I after giving a big price for the finest white boards you'd find in Connemara. [*She looks round at the boards.*]

Bartley. How would it be washed up, and we after looking each day for nine days, and a strong wind blowing a while back from the west and south?

Mau. If it wasn't found itself, that wind is raising the sea, and there was a star up against the moon, and it rising in the night. If it was a hundred horses, or a thousand horses you had itself, what is the price of a thousand horses against a son where there is one son only?

Bartley tells the girls to see that the sheep are not jumping in the rye, and to sell the pig with the black feet if there is a good price going, and gives them some other instructions, for, he says, they will be hard set with only one man to do the work. His mother replies that they will be hard set when he is drowned with the rest. Bartley changes his coat and gets his purse and tobacco.

Bart. I'll have half an hour to go down, and you'll see me coming again in two days, or in three days, or maybe in four days if the wind is bad.

Mau. [*turning round to the fire and putting her shawl over her head*]. Isn't it a hard and cruel man won't hear a word from an old woman, and she holding him from the sea?

Cathleen. It's the life of a young man to be going on the sea, and who would listen to an old woman with one thing and she saying it over?

Bart. I must go now quickly. I'll ride down on the red mare, and the gray pony'll run behind me . . . The blessing of God on you. [*He goes out.*]

Mau. [*crying out as he is in the door*]. He's gone now, God spare us, and we'll not see him again. He's gone now, and when the black night is falling I'll have no son left me in the world.

Cath. Why wouldn't you give him your blessing and he looking round in the door? Isn't it sorrow enough is

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on every one in this house without your sending him out with an unlucky word behind him, and a hard word in his ear?

Maurya takes up the tongs and begins raking the fire aimlessly without looking round. Nora says she will take the turf away from the cake. Cathleen cries out that they've forgotten to give Bartley his bit of bread. She takes the cake out of the oven, cuts some of it off, and tells her mother to go down the short cut and give it to Bartley when he comes by the spring. Then the dark word will be broken and she can give him her blessing. The old woman takes the bread, and Cathleen puts a stick in her hand so that she won't slip on the big stones. When she has gone the girls get down the bundle.

Nora. I've heard tell it was a long way to Donegal.

Cath. It is surely. There was a man in here a while ago—the man sold us that knife—and he said if you set off walking from the rocks beyond it would be seven days you'd be in Donegal.

Nora. And what time would a man take, and he floating?

Cathleen opens the bundle and takes out a bit of a stocking. They are puzzled to know if the things are Michael's. They compare the shirt with one in the cottage and find them of the same stuff. Then Nora finds a place in the stocking where she dropped some stitches when she was knitting it.

Cath. [*counts the stitches*]. It's that number is in it. [*Crying out.*] Ah, Nora, isn't it a bitter thing to think of him floating that way to the far north, and no one to keen him but the black hags that do be flying on the sea?

Nora [*swinging herself round, and throwing out her arms on the clothes*]. And isn't it a pitiful thing when there is nothing left of a man who was a great rower and fisher but a bit of an old shirt and a plain stocking?

They hear their mother's step on the path and put away the things. Cathleen says they won't speak of them while Bartley is on the sea. Nora asks if her mother will see that she was crying, and Cathleen tells her to keep her back to the door so that the light won't be on her. Maurya comes in very slowly, without looking at the girls, and goes over to the stool at the other side of the fire. The cloth

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with the bread is still in her hand. The girls look at each other.

Cath. You didn't give him his bit of bread?

Maurya begins to keen softly without looking round.

Cath. Did you see him riding down?

Maurya goes on keening.

Cath. [*a little impatiently*]. God forgive you; isn't it a better thing to raise your voice and tell what you seen, than to be making lamentation for a thing that's done? Did you see Bartley, I'm saying to you.

Mau. [*with a weak voice*]. My heart's broken from this day.

Cath. [*as before*]. Did you see Bartley?

Mau. I seen the fearfulest thing.

Cath. [*looks out*]. God forgive you; he's riding the mare now over the green head, and the gray pony behind him.

Mau. [*starts, so that her shawl falls back from her head and shows her white tossed hair. With a frightened voice*]. The gray pony behind him.

Cath. [*coming to the fire*]. What is it ails you, at all?

Mau. [*speaking very slowly*]. I've seen the fearfulest thing any person has seen, since the day Bride Dara seen the dead man with the child in his arms.

Cath. and Nora. Uah! [*They crouch down in front of the old woman at the fire.*]

Nora. Tell us what it is you seen?

Mau. I went down to the spring well, and I stood there saying a prayer to myself. Then Bartley came along, and he riding on the gray mare with the red pony behind him. [*She puts up her hands, as if to hide something from her eyes.*] The Son of God spare us, Nora!

Cath. What is it you seen?

Mau. I seen Michael himself.

Cath. [*speaking softly*]. You did not, mother; it wasn't Michael you seen, for his body is after being found in the far north, and he's got a clean burial by the grace of God.

Mau. [*a little defiantly*]. I'm after seeing him this day, and he riding and galloping. Bartley came first on the red mare; and I tried to say: "God speed you," but something choked the words in my throat. He went by quickly; and "the blessing of God on you" says he, and I could say nothing. I looked up then, and I crying, at the gray

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pony, and there was Michael upon it—with fine clothes on him, and new shoes on his feet.

Cath. [*begins to keen*]. It's destroyed we are from this day. It's destroyed, surely.

Nora. Didn't the young priest say Almighty God wouldn't leave her destitute with no sin living?

The old woman tells her daughters to have a coffin made for her of the white boards, for she won't live after them. She has had a husband, and a husband's father, and six sons in the house, and some of them were found and some of them were not found, but they're gone now, the lot of them. Stephen and Shawn were carried up, the two of them on the one plank, she says, and in at that door.

She pauses for a moment. The girls start as if they heard something outside. Maurya continues without hearing anything. Patch was drowned out of a curagh that turned over. She was sitting there with Bartley, a baby, on her knees, and she saw two women, and three women, and four women coming in, and they crossing themselves and not saying a word. She pauses again with her hand stretched out to the door. It opens and old women begin to come in, crossing themselves on the threshold, and kneeling down with red petticoats over their heads.

Maurya, half in a dream, asks if it is Patch, or Michael, or what it is about. Cathleen tells her that Michael has been found in the far north. She reaches out and hands Maurya the clothes that belonged to Michael. Maurya stands up slowly and takes them in her hands. Nora looks out, and says they are carrying a thing among them and there's water dripping out of it. The women say it is Bartley.

Two younger women come in and pull out the table. Then men carry in the body of Bartley, laid on a plank, with a bit of sail over it, and lay it on the table. One of the women says that the gray pony knocked him into the sea, and he was washed out where there was a great surf running.

Maurya has gone over and knelt down at the head of the table. The women are keening softly and swaying themselves with a slow movement. Cathleen and Nora kneel at the other end of the table. The men kneel near the door.

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Maurya raises her head and speaks as if she did not see the people around her.

Mau. They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me. . . . I'll have no call now to be up praying when the wind breaks from the south, and you can hear the surf is in the east, and the surf is in the west, making a great stir with the two noises, and they hitting the one on the other. I'll have no call now to be going down and getting Holy Water in the dark nights after Samhain, and I won't care what way the sea is when the other women will be keening. [*To* NORA.] Give me the the Holy Water, Nora, there's a small sup still on the dresser. [NORA *gives it to her.*]

Mau. [*drops* MICHAEL'S *clothes across* BARTLEY'S *feet and sprinkles the Holy Water over him*]. It isn't that I haven't prayed for you, Bartley, to the Almighty God. It isn't that I haven't said prayers in the dark night till you wouldn't know what I'd be saying; but it's a great rest I'll have now, and it's time surely. It's a great rest I'll have now, and a great sleeping in the long nights after Samhain, if it's only a bit of wet flour we do have to eat, and maybe a fish that would be stinking. [*She kneels down again, crossing herself, and saying prayers under her breath.*]

Cathleen asks two of the men if they will make a coffin. She shows them the white boards. One of the men says it's a wonder *she* didn't think to get nails, after all the coffins she has seen made.

Cath. It's getting old she is, and broken.

Maurya stands up again very slowly and spreads out the pieces of Michael's clothes beside the body, sprinkling them with the last of the Holy Water.

Nora [*in a whisper to* CATHLEEN]. She's quiet now and easy; but the day Michael was drowned you could hear her crying out from this to the spring well. It's fonder she was of Michael, and would any one have thought that?

Cath. [*slowly and clearly*]. An old woman will be soon tired with anything she will do, and isn't it nine days herself is after crying and keening, and making great sorrow in the house?

Mau. [*lays her hands together on* BARTLEY'S *feet*]. They're all together this time, and the end is come. May

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the Almighty God have mercy on Bartley's soul, and on Michael's soul, and on the souls of Sheamus and Patch and Stephen and Shawn—[*bending her head*]—and may he have mercy on my soul, Nora, and on the soul of every one is left living in the world. [*She pauses and the keen rises a little more loudly from the women, then sinks away.*]

Mau. [*continuing*]. Michael has a clean burial in the far north, by the grace of Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards, and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living forever, and we must be satisfied.

She kneels down again.

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Cæsar climbs

was very
here?
extreme

CÆSAR AND CLEOPATRA

A Page of History*

By Bernard Shaw

First played in London at the Court Theatre on November 25, 1907.

Argument: Cæsar, having pursued Pompey to Alexandria after the battle of Pharsalia, undertakes to establish Cleopatra upon the throne of Egypt. The adherents of Ptolemy attack Cæsar, who takes refuge in the palace with a small force. Will the resourcefulness of the conqueror enable him to hold out until aid comes, and will Cleopatra triumph over her brother?

On an October night on the Syrian border of Egypt, in the year reckoned afterward by Christian computation as 48 B. C., word that Julius Cæsar has landed with his legions creates a panic in the palace of Cleopatra. Cæsar came to Alexandria in pursuit of Pompey, whom he had defeated at Pharsalia, and there Ptolemy, Cleopatra's brother, having driven her into Syria and assumed control of the government, slew Pompey and presented his head to the conqueror.

Among Cleopatra's attendants are some who counsel selling her to Ptolemy, while others advise flight, but it is found that the young queen has disappeared without asking any one's opinion. Ftatateeta, Cleopatra's chief nurse, believes that she has gone to commune with the Sphinx, where it sits in the desert, watching the way to the sea. When a Nubian sentinel announces that the sacred white cat has been stolen there is a general cry of woe. The inmates of the palace decamp. The torch is thrown down

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the Almighty ned. The sounds of flight die away in the Michael's so
and Stephe blackness and stillness breaks softly into silver have mer noon is rising over the desert. A vast horizon is left li to relief, broken by a huge shape which soon re- a lit self in the spreading radiance as a Sphinx pedestalled on the sands. The upraised eyes of the image look straight forward and upward in infinite fearless vigil. Between its great paws a girl lies motionless, her silken vest heaving gently and regularly with the breathing of a dreamless sleeper, and her braided hair glittering in a shaft of moonlight like a bird's wing.

Suddenly there comes from afar a vaguely fearful sound. It might be the bellow of a Minotaur softened by great distance. Silence: then a few faint, high-ringing trumpet notes. Then silence again. Then a man comes from the south with stealing steps, ravished by the mystery of the night, all wonder, and halts, lost in contemplation, opposite the left flank of the Sphinx, whose bosom, with its burden, is hidden from him by its massive shoulder.

The Man. Hail, Sphinx: salutation from Julius Cæsar! I have wandered in many lands, seeking the lost regions from which my birth into this world exiled me and the company of creatures such as I myself. I have found flocks and pastures, men and cities, but no other Cæsar, no air native to me, no man kindred to me, none who can do my day's deed, and think my night's thought. In the little world yonder, Sphinx, my place is as high as yours in this great desert; only I wander, and you sit still; I conquer, and you endure; I work and wonder, you watch and wait; I look up and am dazzled, look down and am darkened, look round and am puzzled, whilst your eyes never turn from looking out—out of the world—to the lost region —the home from which we have strayed.

To Cæsar the Sphinx is an image of the constant and immortal part of life, silent, full of thoughts, alone in the silver desert.

The girl is wakened by the voice and calls out to Cæsar, addressing him as "Old gentleman." He is startled, thinking the Sphinx spoke. She tells him to climb up quickly to where she is or the Romans will come and eat him, and

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says that she is Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt. Cæsar climbs up on the pedestal.

Cleopatra. I am glad you have come. I was very lonely. Did you happen to see a white cat anywhere?

Cæsar [*sitting slowly down on the right paw in extreme wonderment*]. Have you lost one?

Cleo. Yes, the sacred white cat: is it not dreadful? I brought him here to sacrifice him to the Sphinx; but when we got a little way from the city a black cat called him, and he jumped out of my arms and ran away to it. Do you think that the black cat can have been my great-great-great-grandmother?

Cæsar [*staring at her*]. Your great-great-great-grandmother! Well, why not? Nothing would surprise me on this night of nights.

Cleo. I think it must have been. My great-grandmother's great-grandmother was a black kitten of the sacred white cat; and the river Nile made her his seventh wife. That is why my hair is so wavy. And I always want to be let do as I like, no matter whether it is the will of the gods or not: that is because my blood is made with Nile water.

Cæsar. What are you doing here at this time of night? Do you live here?

Cleo. Of course not: I am the queen; and I shall live in the palace at Alexandria when I have killed my brother, who drove me out of it. When I am old enough I shall do just what I like. I shall be able to poison the slaves and see them wriggle.

He asks her why she is afraid of the Romans.

Cleo. [*very seriously*]. Oh, they would eat us if they caught us. They are barbarians. Their chief is called Julius Cæsar. His father was a tiger and his mother a burning mountain; and his nose is like an elephant's trunk. [CÆSAR *involuntarily rubs his nose.*] They all have long noses, and ivory tusks, and little tails, and seven arms with a hundred arrows in each; and they live on human flesh.

Cæsar. Would you like me to show you a real Roman?

Cleo. [*terrified*]. No. You are frightening me.

Cæsar. No matter: this is only a dream——

Cleo. [*excitedly*]. It is not a dream: it is not a dream.

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See, see. [*She plucks a pin from her hair and jabs it repeatedly into his arm.*]

At last when Cæsar is going she begs him not to leave her to the mercy of the Romans. She is afraid that Cæsar will eat her. He replies that Cæsar never eats women, though she is both a girl and a cat. But that very night, he tells her, she must stand face to face with Cæsar in the palace of her fathers; however terrible Cæsar may be to her, she must confront him as a brave woman and a great queen; she must feel no fear; if her hand shakes and her voice quavers, then—night and death; but if he thinks her worthy to rule he will set her on the throne.

Cleo. [*despairingly*]. No, he will find me out: he will find me out.

Cæsar [*rather mournfully*]. He is easily deceived by women. Their eyes dazzle him; and he sees them not as they are, but as he wishes them to appear to him.

Cleo. [*hopefully*]. Then we will cheat him. I will put on Ftatateeta's headdress; and he will think me quite an old woman.

Cæsar. If you do that he will eat you at one mouthful.

Cleo. But I will give him a cake with my magic opal and seven hairs of the white cat baked in it, and——

Cæsar [*abruptly*]. Pah! you are a little fool. He will eat your cake and you, too. [*He turns contemptuously from her.*]

Cleo. [*running after him and clinging to him*]. Oh, please, please! I will do whatever you tell me. I will be good! I will be your slave. [*Again the terrible bellowing note sounds across the desert, now closer at hand. It is the buccina, the Roman war trumpet.*]

Cæsar. Hark!

Cleo. [*trembling*]. What was that?

Cæsar. Cæsar's voice.

Cleo. [*pulling at his hand*]. Let us run away. Come. Oh, come.

Cæsar. You are safe with me until you stand on your throne to receive Cæsar. Now lead me thither.

Cleo. [*only too glad to get away*]. I will, I will. [*Again the buccina.*] Oh, come, come, come: the gods are angry. Do you feel the earth shaking?

Cæsar. It is the tread of Cæsar's legions.

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Cleo. [*drawing him away*]. This way, quickly. And let us look for the white cat as we go. It is he that has turned you into a Roman.

Cæsar. Incorrigible, oh, incorrigible! Away!

He follows her, the buccina sounding louder as they steal across the desert. The moonlight wanes: the horizon again shows black against the sky, broken only by the fantastic silhouette of the Sphinx. The sky itself vanishes in darkness, from which there is no relief until the gleam of a distant torch falls on great Egyptian pillars supporting the roof of a majestic corridor.

At the farther end of this corridor a Nubian slave appears carrying the torch. Cæsar, still led by Cleopatra, follows him. They come down the corridor, Cæsar peering keenly about at the strange architecture, and at the pillar shadows between which, as the passing torch makes them hurry noiselessly backward, figures of men with wings and hawks' heads, and vast black marble cats seem to flit in and out of ambush. Farther along the wall turns a corner and makes a spacious transept in which Cæsar sees, on his right, a throne, and behind the throne a door. On each side of the throne is a slender pillar with a lamp on it.

This is the place, Cleopatra explains, where she sits when she is allowed to wear her robes. Cæsar tells her to order a slave to light the lamps. She hesitates and then does so timidly. Ftatateeta suddenly comes from behind the throne and commands the slave to stop. She is a huge, grim woman, her face covered with a network of tiny wrinkles, and her eyes old, large, and wise; sinewy handed, very tall, very strong, with the mouth of a bloodhound and the jaws of a bulldog. She is dressed like a person of consequence.

Cæsar calls to a Nubian slave and asks him if he can cut off a head. Ftatateeta is crushed and kneels at Cleopatra's feet. Cæsar tells her to bring the queen's robes and crown. When they are brought he puts the crown on her.

Cæsar. Is it sweet or bitter to be a queen, Cleopatra?

Cleo. Bitter.

Cæsar. Cast out fear; and you will conquer Cæsar. Tota, are the Romans at hand?

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Ftatateeta. They are at hand; and the guard has fled.

The Women [*wailing subduedly*]. Woe to us!

[*The Nubian comes running down the hall.*]

Nubian. The Romans are in the courtyard. [*He bolts through the door. With a shriek the women fly after him.* FTATATEETA'S *jaw expresses savage resolution; she does not budge.* CLEOPATRA *can hardly restrain herself from following them.* CÆSAR *grips her wrist, and looks steadfastly at her. She stands like a martyr.*]

Cæsar. The queen must face Cæsar alone. Answer: "So be it."

Cleo. [*white*]. So be it.

Cæsar [*releasing her*]. Good.

A tramp and tumult of armed men is heard. Cleopatra's terror increases. The buccina sounds close at hand, followed by a formidable clangor of trumpets. This is too much for Cleopatra: she utters a cry and darts toward the door. Ftatateeta stops her ruthlessly.

Ftata. You are my nursling. You have said "So be it"; and if you die for it, you must make the queen's word good. [*She hands* CLEOPATRA *to* CÆSAR, *who takes her back, almost beside herself with apprehension, to the throne.*]

CÆSAR. Now, if you quail——! [*He seats himself on the throne.*]

She stands on the step, all but unconscious, waiting for death. The Roman soldiers troop in tumultuously through the corridor, headed by their ensign with his eagle, and their buccinator, a burly fellow with his instrument coiled round his body, its brazen bell shaped like the head of a howling wolf. When they reach the transept they stare in amazement at the throne; dress into ordered rank opposite it; draw their swords and lift them in the air with a shout of "Hail, Cæsar." Cleopatra turns and stares wildly at Cæsar; grasps the situation; and, with a great sob of relief, falls into his arms.

The court of Ptolemy are assembled in the hall of the royal palace at Alexandria, a spacious and magnificent apartment with great arches through which is seen the sunlit Mediterranean. The monarch himself, aged ten, sits on the throne, surrounded by the councillors. He looks much older than an English boy of ten, but he has

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the childish air, the habit of being in leading strings, the mixture of impotence and petulance, the appearance of being excessively washed, combed, and dressed by other hands, which is exhibited by court-bred princes of all ages.

The object of the council is to discuss what can be done to keep Ptolemy on the throne. When it is said that Cæsar has with him not more than 3,000 foot soldiers and 1,000 horse, the court breaks into derisive laughter. A Roman officer appears in the loggia and commands silence; Cæsar approaches. Cæsar, plainly dressed, but wearing an oak wreath to conceal his baldness, enters, attended by Britannus, his secretary, a tall and solemn Briton of about forty.

Cæsar announces that he is badly in need of money, and demands the payment of 1,600 talents which he claims is owed to Rome. The courtiers murmur loudly. Reckoned in sesterces, the amount is 40,000,000. A sestertius is worth only a loaf of bread, and a talent a blooded racehorse. Cæsar has brought Cleopatra, who enters the hall with Ftatateeta and pulls her brother off the throne.

The Romans are surprised to learn that the little Ptolemy is the husband of his sixteen-year-old sister, and Britannus is shocked. Cæsar explains to the latter that Ptolemy and Cleopatra are born king and consort just as they are born brother and sister. The kings and queens of Egypt may not marry except with their own royal blood. Britannus must not think that the customs of his tribe and island are the laws of nature. Cæsar decrees that Ptolemy and Cleopatra shall reign jointly.

A bitter dispute arises over the matter of the payment to Rome, the Egyptians raising the cry, "Egypt for the Egyptians." The courtiers tell Cæsar that it is useless for him to try to bluff them. He has been defeated before and may be again. They defy him vociferously. He sits as comfortably as if he were at breakfast and the cat clamoring for a piece of finnan haddie. It is proposed that they shall seize Cleopatra, now that she is at hand, and they see no reason for not taking Cæsar, too.

Rufio, Cæsar's lieutenant, calls the guard. The loggia immediately fills with Cæsar's soldiers, who stand sword in hand, waiting the word to charge from their centurion.

Cleo. Won't you cut their heads off?

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Cæsar. What! Cut off your brother's head?

Cleo. Why not? He would cut off mine if he got the chance. Wouldn't you Ptolemy?

Ptolemy [*pale and obstinate*]. I would. I will, too, when I grow up.

Cleopatra is rent by a struggle between her newly-acquired dignity as a queen and her desire to put out her tongue at him.

Rufio announces that the Romans hold the palace, the beach, and the eastern harbor. The road to Rome is open, and the courtiers shall travel it if Cæsar chooses. Cæsar says that all in the palace are free to go. Rufio is aghast at this clemency. Pothinus, the king's guardian, makes a last appeal to Cæsar's justice, as he says, and will call a witness to prove that Pompey would have had Cæsar at his mercy if it had not been for them. He calls for Lucius Septimius. Cæsar shrinks at the name.

Cæsar hides his face with his cloak for a moment as Lucius confronts him. Pothinus asks if they sheltered Cæsar's foe. Lucius replies that he cut off Pompey's head the instant he landed. Theodotus, Ptolemy's tutor, adds with viperish relish that the deed was done under the eyes of Pompey's wife and child; they have given Cæsar a full and sweet measure of vengeance. Cæsar is horror-stricken.

Lucius. It is so. With this hand, that slew Pompey, I placed his head at the feet of Cæsar.

Cæsar. Murderer! So would you have slain Cæsar had Pompey been victorious at Pharsalia.

Lucius. Woe to the vanquished, Cæsar! When I served Pompey I slew as good men as he only because he conquered them. His turn came at last.

Theodotus [*flatteringly*]. The deed was not yours, Cæsar, but ours—nay, mine; for it was done by my counsel. Thanks to us you keep your reputation for clemency, and have your vengeance, too.

Cæsar. Vengeance! Vengeance!! Oh, if I could stoop to vengeance, what would I not exact from you as the price of this murdered man's blood! [*They shrink back, appalled and disconcerted.*] Was he not my son-in-law, my ancient friend, for twenty years the master of great Rome, for thirty years the compeller of victory? Did not I, as a Roman,

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share his glory? Was the Fate that forced us to fight for mastery of the world of our making? Am I Julius Cæsar, or am I a wolf, that you fling to me the gray head of the old soldier, the laurelled conqueror, the mighty Roman, treacherously struck down by this callous ruffian, and then claim my gratitude for it! [*To* LUCIUS SEPTIMIUS.] Begone! you fill me with horror.

Lucius [*cold and undaunted*]. Pshaw! you have seen severed heads before, Cæsar, and severed right hands, too, I think; some thousands of them, in Gaul, after you vanquished Vercingetorix. Did you spare him, with all your clemency? Was that vengeance?

Cæsar. No, by the gods! would that it had been! Vengeance at least is human. No, I say those severed right hands, and the brave Vercingetorix basely strangled in a vault beneath the capitol were [*with shuddering satire*] a wise severity, a necessary protection to the commonwealth, a duty of statesmanship—follies and fictions ten times bloodier than honest vengeance! What a fool was I then! To think that men's lives should be at the mercy of such fools! [*Humbly.*] Lucius Septimius, pardon me, why should the slayer of Vercingetorix rebuke the slayer of Pompey? You are free to go with the rest. Or stay if you will: I will find a place for you in my service.

Lucius. The odds are against you, Cæsar. I go.

Rufio is filled with wrath at the escape of his prey. He says the enemies that Cæsar spared yesterday his soldiers will have to fight to-morrow. Hereafter he will give no quarter.

Cleopatra speaks to Cæsar of a beautiful young man, with strong, round arms, who came over the desert with many horsemen, and slew his sister's husband and gave the throne back to her father. Cleopatra was only twelve then. She wishes now that she is queen he would come again. She would make him her husband. Cæsar thinks perhaps that might be managed, for it was he who sent that beautiful young man to help her father. His name is Marc Antony.

A soldier comes in and reports to Cæsar that an army calling itself the Roman army of occupation has come to Alexandria, and that when it entered the gates the citizens rose against Cæsar's men. Cæsar tells the soldier to give

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the word to turn out his men on the beach. To Rufio he gives the command to burn the boats in the west harbor and to use those in the east harbor to attack the lighthouse, for that commands the way home.

A little later, when Cæsar is giving directions to Rufio, he is interrupted by an outcry as of an old man in the extremity of misfortune. It draws near rapidly; and Theodotus rushes in, tearing his hair, and squeaking the most lamentable exclamations.

Theo. [*rushing down the hall between them*]. The fire has spread from your ships. The first of the seven wonders of the world perishes. The library of Alexandria is in flames.

Rufio. Pshaw! [*Quite relieved, he goes up to the loggia and watches the preparations of the troops on the beach.*]

Cæsar. Is that all?

Theo. [*unable to believe his senses*]. All! Cæsar, will you go down to posterity as a barbarous soldier too ignorant to know the value of books?

Cæsar. Theodotus, I am an author myself; and I tell you it is better that the Egyptians should live their lives than dream them away with the help of books.

Theo. [*kneeling, with genuine literary emotion: the passion of the pedant*]. Cæsar, once in ten generations of men the world gains an immortal book.

Cæsar [*inflexible*]. If it did not flatter mankind, the common executioner would burn it.

Theo. Without history death would lay you beside your meanest soldier.

Cæsar. Death will do that in any case. I ask no better grave.

Theo. What is burning there is the memory of mankind.

Cæsar. A shameful memory. Let it burn.

Theo. [*wildly*]. Will you destroy the past?

Cæsar. Ay, and build the future with its ruins. [THEODOTUS, *in despair, strikes himself on the temples with his fists.*] But harken, Theodotus, teacher of kings: you who valued Pompey's head no more than a shepherd values an onion, and who now kneel to me, with tears in your old eyes, to plead for a few sheepskins scrawled with errors, I cannot spare you a man or a bucket of water just now;

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but you shall pass freely out of the palace. Now, away with you to Achillas; and borrow his legions to put out the fire. [*He hurries him to the steps.*]

Cæsar counts on taking the lighthouse while the Egyptian soldiers are putting out the fire.

Cleopatra runs in through the loggia with Cæsar's helmet and sword, snatched from Britannus, who follows her with a cuirass and greaves. They come down to Cæsar, she to his left hand, Britannus to his right.

Cleo. I am going to dress you, Cæsar. Sit down. [*He obeys.*] These Roman helmets are so becoming! [*She takes off his wreath.*] Oh! [*She bursts out laughing at him.*]

Cæsar. What are you laughing at?

Cleo. You're bald [*beginning with a big B, and ending with a splutter*].

Cleopatra asks Britannus if it is true that all Britons of good standing stain their bodies blue. He replies it is true that they do so in war; so that though their enemies may strip them of their clothes and even their lives, they cannot strip them of their respectability.

At the last moment Cleopatra begs Cæsar not to go into battle. That was the way her sister's husband was killed. And what would happen to her if Cæsar didn't come back? Cæsar tells her to go to the balcony and watch them take the Pharos. She must learn to look on battles.

The edge of the quay in front of the palace, looking out west over the east harbor of Alexandria to Pharos Island, just off the end of which, and connected with it by a narrow mole, is the famous lighthouse, a gigantic square tower of white marble diminishing in size story by story to the top, on which stands a cresset beacon. The island is joined to the mainland by the Heptastadium, a great mole or causeway five miles long bounding the harbor on the south.

A sentinel on guard in the middle of the quay is watching the progress of the attack on the Pharos so closely that he does not observe the approach of Ftatateeta with Apollodorus the Sicilian, a dashing young man of about twenty-four dressed with deliberate æstheticism. He is followed by four porters carrying rolls of carpet. Suddenly the sentinel turns and halts the caravan. Apollodorus explains that he is bringing carpets for the furnishing of the queen's

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apartments in the palace. He says that he does not keep a shop, but a temple of the arts. He is a worshipper of beauty. His calling is to choose beautiful things for beautiful queens. His motto is Art for Art's sake.

The sentinel does not recognize the password, but Ftatateeta, seizing the sentinel's arms from behind, bids Apollodorus slit his throat. This the worshipper of Art is loath to do, and presently the sentinel is rescued by the guard.

Cleopatra comes running out of the palace to Ftatateeta in feverish excitement. She has thought of something that she must do, and wants a boat at once. She also comes into conflict with authority, for the soldiers are under orders to let no one pass through the lines. Cleopatra is inspired with a happy thought. She asks if she can send a carpet to Cæsar, and this request is granted.

This carpet is to be delivered by Apollodorus, and Cleopatra cautions him to handle it with the greatest care, for she is going to send in it a delicate glass goblet. She goes into the palace, followed by the porters, to prepare the bale. When the porters return with their burden Ftatateeta accompanies them and superintends the lading of the boat. She says that ten precious goblets of the thinnest Iberian crystal and a hundred eggs of the sacred blue pigeon are wrapped up in the carpet. The porters think that the eggs must weigh a pound apiece.

When the boat is standing out toward the Pharos Ftatateeta falls on her knees, stretching her hands over the waters, and supplicates the gods of the seas to bear *her* safely to the shore. The sentinel tries to recall the boat but it has gone too far.

Meanwhile Rufio, the morning's fighting done, sits munching dates on a faggot of brushwood outside the door of the lighthouse, which towers gigantic to the clouds on his left. His helmet, full of dates, is between his knees, and a leathern bottle of wine is by his side. Cæsar is standing on a parapet, looking out anxiously over the water. Britannus comes out of the lighthouse.

The Briton says that there is a machine in the lighthouse for working a heavy crane, which has counterweights and a place for boiling water which he does not understand. It is not of British design.

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Cæsar fears that his men will be beaten, but Rufio tells him to eat some dates and have some wine, and then to take another look at their chances. At Cæsar's age, he says, a man runs down before his midday meal.

Apollodorus arrives with the bale and it is hoisted up with the lighthouse crane. Rufio urges Cæsar not to wait to see what is in the bale, but to superintend the completion of a barricade which his soldiers are raising across the mole that connects with the land. Cæsar, fortified by a few dates and a swallow of wine, now despises the Egyptian attack.

Throwing the carpet open, Apollodorus asks Cæsar to approach. Inside the bale is a heap of shawls which stirs slightly. Rufio fears treachery and draws his sword. Britannus thinks there is a serpent in the shawls, but Cæsar thrusts in his hand and draws forth an arm.

Cæsar. This is a pretty little snake.

Rufio [*drawing out the other arm*]. Let us have the rest of you.

They pull Cleopatra up by the wrists into a sitting position. Britannus, scandalized, sheathes his sword with a drive of protest.

Cleo. [*gasping*]. Oh, I'm smothered. Oh, Cæsar; a man stood on me in the boat; and a great sack of something fell on me out of the sky; and then the boat sank, and then I was swung up into the air and bumped down.

Cæsar [*petting her as she rises and takes refuge on his breast*]. Well, never mind, here you are safe and sound at last.

Rufio. Ay; and now that she is here, what are we to do with her?

Britannus. She cannot stay here, Cæsar, without the companionship of some matron.

In the face of the impending attack, Cæsar says that Apollodorus must take Cleopatra back to the palace. There is no boat at hand. Suddenly a great tumult is heard in the distance, buccinas and trumpets sounding through a storm of shouting. Britannus rushes to the parapet and looks along the mole. Cæsar and Rufio turn to one another with quick intelligence. Cleopatra clings to Cæsar, imploring him not to leave her.

Britannus announces that they are cut off, the Egyp-

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tians having landed on the mole between them and the barricade. They are caught like rats in a trap. Cæsar mourns the men he has sacrificed at the barricade. Some of Cæsar's galleys are standing in at the harbor's entrance, and Apollodorus suggests swimming to meet them. He plunges into the sea.

Cæsar, wildly excited, will not be restrained from following Apollodorus. He directs Rufio to wait until he is in the water and then throw Cleopatra in to him. The queen protests vigorously. She cannot swim, and neither can Britannus. Cæsar tells them to remain where they are until he has retaken the lighthouse. As he poises himself on the parapet Britannus reminds him not to appear in the fashionable part of Alexandria until he has changed his clothes.

With an exultant cry Cæsar leaps from the parapet. Cleopatra runs to look after him and Rufio pitches her screaming into the water. Rufio and Britannus roar with laughter. When they see that Cæsar has got the queen, Rufio jumps in, too, leaving Britannus to hide in the lighthouse.

Cleopatra's sousing in the east harbor of Alexandria was in October, 48 B. C. In March, 47, she is passing the afternoon in her boudoir in the palace, among a bevy of her ladies, listening to a slave girl who is playing the harp in the middle of the room.

Pothinus seeks an interview with the queen. He regards her as a child because she declares that he is no more a prisoner than she, who is indeed confined to the palace as Cæsar himself is.

Charmian. I see you do not know the latest news, Pothinus.

Pothinus. What is that?

Char. That Cleopatra is no longer a child. Shall I tell you how to grow much older, and much, much wiser in one day?

Poth. I should prefer to grow wiser without growing older.

Char. Well, go up to the top of the lighthouse, and get somebody to take you by the hair and throw you into the sea. [*The ladies laugh.*]

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Cleo. She is right, Pothinus, you will come to the shore with much conceit washed out of you. [*The ladies laugh.* CLEOPATRA *rises impatiently.*] Begone, all of you. I will speak with Pothinus alone. Drive them out, Ftatateeta. [*They run out laughing.* FTATATEETA *shuts the door on them.*] What are you waiting for?

Ftata. It is not meet that the queen remain alone with——

Cleo. [*interrupting her*]. Ftatateeta, must I sacrifice you to your father's gods to teach you that *I* am Queen of Egypt, and not you?

Ftata. [*indignantly*]. You are like the rest of them. You want to be what these Romans call a New Woman. [*She goes out, banging the door.*]

Cleo. [*sitting down again*]. Now, Pothinus: why did you bribe Ftatateeta to bring you hither?

Poth. [*studying her gravely*]. Cleopatra, what they tell me is true. You are changed.

Cleo. Do you speak with Cæsar every day for six months, and you will be changed.

Poth. It is the common talk that you are infatuated with this old man.

Cleo. Infatuated? What does that mean? Made foolish, is it not? Oh, no, I wish I were.

Poth. You wish you were made foolish! How so?

Cleo. When I was foolish, I did what I liked, except when Ftatateeta beat me; and even then I cheated her and did it by stealth. Now that Cæsar has made me wise, it is no use my liking or disliking; I do what must be done, and have no time to attend to myself. That is not happiness; but it is greatness. If Cæsar were gone I think I could govern the Egyptians; for what Cæsar is to me I am to the fools around me.

Poth. [*looking hard at her*]. Cleopatra, this may be the vanity of youth.

Cleo. No, no, it is not that I am so clever, but that the others are so stupid.

Poth. [*musingly*]. Truly, that is the great secret.

She tells Pothinus that Cæsar loves no one. Who are those whom we love? Only those whom we do not hate? All people are strangers and enemies to us, she says, except those we love. But it is not so with Cæsar. He has no

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hatred in him: he makes friends with every one as he does with dogs and children. Pothinus asks how she can be sure that Cæsar does not love her as men love women. She replies that she cannot make him jealous.

The plan that Pothinus is nurturing, she tells him, is that of ruling Egypt by making Ptolemy king. She warns him that Cæsar will eat them up as a cat eats up mice; that he will put his foot on this land of Egypt. Pothinus breaks out wrathfully, declaring that they have a thousand men to Cæsar's ten, and that they will drive him into the sea. He would do well to make haste, she replies, for Mithridates of Pergamos is at hand with reinforcements for Cæsar. Saying that Cæsar has spoiled her for talking with weak things like him, Cleopatra leaves him.

Ftatateeta, who has had a woman listen to Pothinus's conversation with the queen, comes forward. Pothinus assures her that while he lives Cleopatra shall not rule.

It is drawing on toward dinner time. The table is laid on the roof of the palace. Light curtains are drawn between the columns to soften the westering sun. Cæsar, fresh from the bath, clad in a new tunic of purple silk, comes in beaming and festive to dine with Cleopatra, Apollodorus, and Rufio, who is already there, with a new baldrick, hair fresh-cut, and other embellishments. These preparations have been made in honor of Cæsar's birthday. Rufio remarks that last year Cæsar had seven birthdays in ten months.

Cæsar is annoyed to learn that Pothinus is still a prisoner in the palace. He accuses Rufio of guarding the man instead of watching the enemy; he has told Rufio always to let prisoners escape unless there are special orders to the contrary.

[POTHINUS *enters and stops mistrustfully between the two, looking from one to the other.*]

Cæsar [*graciously*]. Ah, Pothinus! You are welcome. And what is the news this afternoon?

Poth. Cæsar, I come to warn you of a danger, and to make you an offer.

Cæsar. Never mind the danger. Make the offer.

Rufio. Never mind the offer. What's the danger?

Poth. Cæsar: you think that Cleopatra is devoted to you.

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Cæsar [*gravely*]. My friend, I already know what I think. Come to your offer.

Poth. I will deal plainly. I know not by what strange gods you have been enabled to defend a palace and a few yards of beach against a city and an army. Since we cut you off from Lake Mareotis, and you dug wells in the salt sea sand and brought up buckets of fresh water from them, we have known that your gods are irresistible, and that you are a worker of miracles. I no longer threaten you——

Rufio [*sarcastically*]. Very handsome of you, indeed.

Poth. So be it: you are the master. Our gods sent the northwest winds to keep you in our hands; but you have been too strong for them.

Cæsar [*gently urging him to come to the point*]. Yes, yes, my friend. But what then?

Rufio. Spit it out, man. What have you to say?

Poth. I have to say that you have a traitress in your camp. Cleopatra——

The Major-Domo [*at the table, announcing*]. The queen! [CÆSAR *and* RUFIO *rise.*]

Rufio [*aside to* POTHINUS]. You should have spat it out sooner, you fool. Now it is too late.

[CLEOPATRA, *in gorgeous raiment, enters in state through the gap in the colonnade, and comes down past the image of Ra and past the table to* CÆSAR. *Her retinue, headed by* FTATATEETA, *joins the staff at the table.* CÆSAR *gives* CLEOPATRA *his seat, which she takes.*]

Cleo. [*quickly, seeing* POTHINUS]. What is he doing here?

Cæsar [*seating himself beside her, in the most amiable of tempers*]. Just going to tell me something about you. You shall hear it. Proceed, Pothinus.

Poth. [*disconcerted*]. Cæsar—— [*He stammers.*]

Cæsar. Well, out with it.

Poth. What I have to say is for your ear, not for the queen's.

Cleo. [*with subdued ferocity*]. There are means of making you speak. Take care.

Poth. [*defiantly*]. Cæsar does not employ those means.

Cæsar. My friend, when a man has anything to tell in this world, the difficulty is not to make him tell it, but to prevent him from telling it too often. Let me celebrate my

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birthday by setting you free. Farewell; we shall not meet again.

Cleo. [*angrily*]. Cæsar, this mercy is foolish.

Poth. [*to* CÆSAR]. Will you not give me a private audience? Your life may depend on it. [CÆSAR *rises loftily.*]

Rufio [*aside to* POTHINUS]. Ass! Now we shall have some heroics.

Cæsar [*oratorically*]. Pothinus——

Rufio [*interrupting him*]. Cæsar, the dinner will spoil if you begin preaching your favorite sermon about life and death.

Cleo. [*priggishly*]. Peace, Rufio. I desire to hear Cæsar.

Rufio [*bluntly*]. Your Majesty has heard it before. You repeated it to Apollodorus last week, and he thought it was all your own. [CÆSAR'S *dignity collapses. Much tickled, he sits down again and looks roguishly at* CLEOPATRA, *who is furious.* RUFIO *calls as before.*] Ho there, guard! Pass the prisoner out. He is released. [*To* POTHINUS.] Now off with you. You have lost your chance.

Poth. [*his temper overcoming his prudence*]. I will speak.

Cæsar [*to* CLEOPATRA]. You see. Torture would not have wrung a word from him.

Pothinus asks if Cæsar has taught Cleopatra the arts by which the Romans govern the world, and if he is so besotted with her beauty that as not to see that she is impatient to reign in Egypt alone and is set on his departure. Cæsar does not resent the wind when it chills him, he replies, or the night when it makes him stumble in the darkness. Should he resent youth when it turns from age, he asks, ambition when it turns from servitude?

Cleo. [*unable to restrain herself*]. But it is false—false. I swear it!

Cæsar. It is true, though you swore it a thousand times, and believed all you swore. [*She is convulsed with emotion. To screen her, he rises and takes* POTHINUS *to* RUFIO, *saying.*] Come, Rufio, let us see Pothinus past the guard. I have a word to say to him. [*Aside to them.*] We must give the queen a moment to recover herself. [*Aloud.*] Come. [*He takes* POTHINUS *and* RUFIO *out with him, conversing with them meanwhile.*] Tell your friends,

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FORBES-ROBERTSON AS CÆSAR AND GERTRUDE ELLIOTT AS CLEOPATRA

Cæsar, glancing at Cleopatra, catches her pouring out her wine before the god with gleaming eyes and mute assurance of gratitude and worship

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Pothinus, that they must not think I am opposed to a reasonable settlement of the country's affairs—— [*They pass out of hearing.*]

Cleo. [*in a stifled whisper*]. Ftatateeta, Ftatateeta.

Ftata. [*hurrying to her from the table and petting her*]. Peace, child, be comforted——

Cleo. [*interrupting her*]. Can they hear us?

Ftata. No, dear heart, no.

Cleo. Listen to me. If he leaves the palace alive, never see my face again.

Ftata. He? Poth——

Cleo. [*striking her on the mouth*]. Strike his life out as I strike his name from your lips. Dash him down from the wall. Break him on the stones. Kill, kill, kill him!

Ftata. [*showing all her teeth*]. The dog shall perish.

Cleo. Fail in this, and you go out from before me forever.

Ftata. [*resolutely*]. So be it. You shall not see my face until his eyes are darkened.

Cæsar comes back presently with Apollodorus, sits down to dinner and utters some of the best aphorisms current in those times. One year of Rome is like another, he says, except that he grows older whilst the crowd in the Appian Way is always the same age. Apollodorus replies that it is no better in Egypt. The old men, when they are tired of life, say, "We have seen everything except the source of the Nile."

The idea of finding the source of the Nile at once occurs to Cæsar. He suggests founding a city there, and Cleopatra, delighted with the idea, says she will ask Father Nile what to name it.

Cleo. You must say with me: "Send us thy voice, Father Nile."

The three men repeat the words with her, holding their glasses before an idol. The death cry of a man in mortal terror and agony breaks on their ears as if in answer. Appalled, the men set down their glasses and listen. Silence. The purple deepens in the sky. Cæsar, glancing at Cleopatra, catches her pouring out her wine before the god with gleaming eyes and mute assurance of gratitude and worship. Apollodorus springs up and runs to the edge of the roof to peer down and listen.

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Cæsar, with a piercing look at Cleopatra, asks what the sound was. Rufio would swear it was a man with a knife in him. Apollodorus says he has heard a thud—as if something with bones in it had fallen on the beach from a height. He hurries out to investigate, and Cæsar is about to follow him when Rufio stops him with a hand on his arm as Ftatateeta comes back by the far end of the roof, with dragging steps, a drowsy satiety in her eyes and in the corners of the bloodhound lips. For a moment Cæsar suspects that she is drunk with wine. Not so Rufio: he knows well the red vintage that has inebriated her.

Cleopatra looks at her for a moment with an exultant reflection of her murderous expression. Then she flings her arms round her; kisses her repeatedly and savagely; and tears off her jewels and heaps them on her. The two men turn from the spectacle to look at one another. Ftatateeta drags herself sleepily to the altar; kneels before Ra; and remains there in prayer. Cæsar goes to Cleopatra, leaving Rufio in the colonnade.

Cleopatra, in mortal dread, her voice almost failing, but with the utmost cajolery, assures Cæsar she has done nothing. The murmur that has arisen without suddenly swells to a roar and then subsides. Cleopatra swears that she has not betrayed Cæsar. She purposely breaks down and weeps. Seeing that he is unmoved, she sits up, pretending to struggle with her emotion and to put it bravely away. He asks her what she has done. A trumpet sounds on the beach as if in answer.

It is reported to Cæsar that Pothinus has been assassinated, and that the people having learned of it are coming to attack the palace. Cæsar turns and looks at Cleopatra. She rises and says violently that Pothinus was slain by her order. She is not Julius Cæsar the dreamer, who allows every one to insult him. Rufio has said that she did well, and now she says the others shall judge her. She tells them Pothinus sought to make her conspire with him to betray Cæsar to Ptolemy. When she refused he went to Cæsar and accused her of treachery. If one man in all Alexandria can be found to say that she did wrong, she swears to have herself crucified on the door of the palace by her own slaves.

Cæsar. If one man in all the world can be found, now

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or forever, to know that you did wrong, that man will have either to conquer the world as I have, or be crucified by it. [*The uproar in the streets again reaches them.*] Do you hear? These knockers at your gate are also believers in vengeance and in stabbing. You have slain their leader: it is right that they shall slay you. If you doubt it, ask your four counsellors here. And then in the name of that right—[*he emphasizes the word with great scorn*]—shall I not slay them for murderiing their queen, and be slain in my turn by their countrymen as the invader of their fatherland? Can Rome do less than slay these slayers, too, to shew the world how Rome avenges her sons and her honor? And so, to the end of history, murder shall breed murder, always in the name of right and honor and peace, until the gods are tired of blood and create a race that can understand. [*Fierce uproar.* CLEOPATRA *becomes white with terror.*] Hearken, you who must not be insulted. Go near enough to catch their words: you will find them bitterer than the tongue of Pothinus. [*Loftily wrapping himself up in an impenetrable dignity.*] Let the Queen of Egypt now give her orders for vengeance, and take her measures for defence; for she has renounced Cæsar. [*He turns to go.*]

Cleo. [*terrified, running to him and falling on her knees*]. You will not desert me, Cæsar. You will defend the palace.

Cæsar. You have taken the powers of life and death upon you. I am only a dreamer.

Cleo. But they will kill me.

Cæsar. And why not?

Cleo. In pity——

Cæsar. Pity! What! has it come to this so suddenly, that nothing can save you now but pity? Did it save Pothinus?

She rises, wringing her hands, and goes back to the bench in despair. Apollodorus shews his sympathy with her by quietly posting himself behind the bench. The sky has by this time become the most vivid purple, and soon begins to change to a glowing pale orange, against which the colonnade and the great image show darklier and darklier.

Rufio. Cæsar, enough of preaching. The enemy is at the gate.

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Cæsar [*turning on him and giving way to his wrath*]. Ay; and what has held him baffled at the gate all these months? Was it my folly, as you deem it, or your wisdom? In this Egyptian Red Sea of blood whose hand has held all your heads above the waves? [*Turning on* CLEOPATRA.] And yet when Cæsar says to such an one, "Friend, go free," you, clinging for your little life to my sword, dare steal out and stab him in the back? And you, soldiers and gentlemen, and honest servants as you forget that you are, applaud this assassination, and say: "Cæsar is in the wrong." By the gods, I am tempted to open my hand and let you all sink into the flood.

Cleo. [*with a ray of cunning hope*]. But, Cæsar, if you do, you will perish yourself.

[CÆSAR'S *eyes blaze.*]

Rufio [*greatly alarmed*]. Now, by great Jove, you filthy little Egyptian rat, that is the very word to make him walk out alone into the city and leave us here to be cut to pieces. [*Desperately, to* CÆSAR.] Will you desert us because we are a parcel of fools? I mean no harm by killing: I do it as a dog kills a cat, by instinct. We are all dogs at your heels; but we have served you faithfully.

Cæsar [*relenting*]. Alas, Rufio, my son, my son: as dogs we are like to perish now in the streets.

Apollodorus [*at his post behind* CLEOPATRA'S *seat*]. Cæsar, what you say has an Olympian ring in it: it must be right; for it is fine art. But I am still on the side of Cleopatra. If we must die, she shall not want the devotion of a man's heart nor the strength of a man's arm.

Cleo. [*sobbing*]. But I don't want to die.

Cæsar [*sadly*]. Oh, ignoble, ignoble!

Lucius [*coming forward between* CÆSAR *and* CLEOPATRA]. Hearken to me, Cæsar. It may be ignoble; but I also mean to live as long as I can.

Cæsar. Well, my friend, you are likely to outlive Cæsar. Is it any magic of mine, think you, that has kept your army and this whole city at bay for so long? Yesterday what quarrel had they with me that they should risk their lives against me? But to-day we have flung them down their hero, murdered; and now every man of them is set upon clearing out this nest of assassins—for such we are and

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no more. Take courage, then; and sharpen your sword. Pompey's head has fallen; and Cæsar's head is ripe.

Apol. Does Cæsar despair?

Cæsar [*with infinite pride*]. He who has never hoped can never despair. Cæsar, in good or bad fortune, looks his fate in the face.

Lucius. Look it in the face, then; and it will smile as it always has on Cæsar.

Cæsar [*with involuntary haughtiness*]. Do you presume to encourage me?

Lucius. I offer you my services. I will change sides if you will have me.

Cæsar [*suddenly coming down to earth again, and looking sharply at him, divining that there is something behind the offer*]. What! At this point?

Lucius [*firmly*]. At this point.

Rufio. Do you suppose Cæsar is mad to trust you?

Lucius. I do not ask him to trust me until he is victorious. I ask for my life, and for a command in Cæsar's army. And since Cæsar is a fair dealer, I will pay in advance.

Cæsar. Pay! How?

Lucius. With a piece of good news for you.

[CÆSAR *divines the news in a flash.*]

Rufio. What news?

Cæsar [*with an elate and buoyant energy which makes* CLEOPATRA *sit up and stare*]. What news! What news, did you say, my son Rufio? The relief has arrived: what other news remains for us? Is it not so, Lucius Septimius? Mithridates of Pergamos is on the march.

Lucius. He has taken Pelusium.

Cæsar [*delighted*]. Lucius Septimius, you are henceforth my officer. Rufio, the Egyptians must have sent every soldier from the city to prevent Mithridates crossing the Nile. There is nothing in the streets now but mob—mob!

Lucius. It is so. Mithridates is marching by the great road to Memphis to cross above the Delta. Achillas will fight him there.

Cæsar [*all audacity*]. Achillas shall fight Cæsar there. See, Rufio. [*He runs to the table; snatches a napkin; and draws a plan on it with his finger dipped in wine, whilst*

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RUFIO *and* LUCIUS SEPTIMIUS *crowd about him to watch, all looking closely, for the light is now almost gone.*] Here is the palace—[*pointing to his plan*]—here is the theatre. You [*to* RUFIO] take twenty men and pretend to go by that street—[*pointing it out*]—and whilst they are stoning you, out go the cohorts by this and this. My streets are right, are they, Lucius?

Lucius. Ay, that is the fig market——

Cæsar [*too much excited to listen to him*]. I saw them the day we arrived. Good! [*He throws the napkin on the table and comes down again into the colonnade.*] Away, Britannus: tell Petronius that within an hour half our forces must take ship for the western lake. See to my horse and armor. [BRITANNUS *runs out.*] With the rest *I* shall march round the lake and up the Nile to meet Mithridates. Away, Lucius, and give the word.

[LUCIUS *hurries out after* BRITANNUS.]

Rufio. Come, this is something like business.

Cæsar [*buoyantly*]. Is it not, my only son? [*He claps his hands. The slaves hurry in to the table.*] No more of this mawkish revelling: away with all this stuff, shut it out of my sight and be off with you. [*The slaves begin to remove the table; and the curtains are drawn, shutting in the colonnade.*] You understand about the streets, Rufio?

Rufio. Ay, I think I do. I will get through them at all events.

The buccina sounds busily in the courtyard beneath.

As Cæsar is about to go Cleopatra, who has been neglected for some time, stretches out her hands to him timidly, but preoccupied and indifferent; he departs with a casual word in reply to her desperate exclamation, "Cæsar!" Rufio tells her the game is played and lost; the woman always gets the worst of it. Then with rough familiarity he adds that she should tell her executioner that if Pothinus had been properly killed—in the throat—he would not have called out.

Upon drawing the curtains to go out Rufio sees Ftatateeta in the light of the moon and stars in prayer before the white altar stone of Ra. He starts; closes the curtains again softly; and asks Cleopatra if it was she. The queen does not say, but he loosens his sword in its sheath as he

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slips out through the curtains. The buccina sounds again, followed by several trumpets. Cleopatra, feeling her loneliness in the dark, calls to Ftatateeta. There is no answer. In panic she snatches the cord and pulls the curtains apart. Ftatateeta is lying dead on the altar of Ra, with her throat cut. Her blood deluges the white stone.

It is the hour of Cæsar's departure from Alexandria six months after his pursuit of Pompey. The esplanade before the palace is the scene of a brilliant military pageant. Cæsar's galley, so gorgeously decorated that it seems to be rigged with flowers, is alongside the quay. The broad steps of the gate, crowded with Cleopatra's ladies, all in their gayest attire, are like a flower garden. The façade is lined by her guard. The north side is lined by Roman soldiers, with the townsfolk on tiptoe behind them.

There is a flourish of trumpets and a commotion among the townsfolk as Cæsar arrives in state. He has defeated his enemies, and it is said that Ptolemy was accidentally drowned in the Nile. Having appointed Rufio governor of Egypt, Cæsar thinks there is something which he has forgotten but, pressed for time, moves toward the gangway. Cleopatra, cold and tragic, comes forward on the palace steps. He does not see her until she speaks, asking if she has no part in this leavetaking. This is what he had forgotten. He answers that had he gone without seeing her he should never have forgiven himself.

Cleopatra inquires if Rufio is to govern in Cæsar's way, without punishment, without revenge, without judgment. Cæsar says that is the right way, the great way, the only possible way in the end. Then she informs him that Rufio has shed the blood of her servant, Ftatateeta.

Cleo. On your head be it as upon his, Cæsar, if you hold him free of it.

Cæsar [*energetically*]. On my head be it, then; for it was well done. Rufio, had you set yourself in the seat of the judge, and with hateful ceremonies and appeals to the gods handed that woman over to some hired executioner to be slain before the people in the name of justice, never again would I have touched your hand without a shudder. But this was natural slaying: I feel no horror at it.

Finally he placates her with a promise to send her Marc

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Antony. He kisses her on the forehead and embarks. She tells Apollodorus that she does not wish for Cæsar's return, but she cannot help crying all the same. She waves her handkerchief to Cæsar and the ship begins to move. The Roman soldiers, drawing their swords and raising them in the air, shout, "Hail, Cæsar!"

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THE VOYSEY INHERITANCE*

By Granville Barker

First played in London at the Court Theatre on November 7, 1905.

Argument: Mr. Voysey, a private banker, reveals to Edward, his son and partner, that the capital of some of their clients has been missing for a number of years and asks Edward to share his responsibility. Mr. Voysey's death practically compels Edward to continue the business in an irregular manner. Can he reconcile his conscience to such a course, and can he pursue it without disaster?

The office of Voysey and Son is in the best part of Lincoln's Inn. Its panelled rooms give out a sense of grandmotherly comfort and security, very grateful at first to the hesitating investor, the dubious litigant. Mr. Voysey's own room, into which he walks about twenty past ten of a morning, radiates enterprise besides.

Mr. Voysey is sixty or more, and masterful; would obviously be master anywhere from his own home outward, or wreck the situation in his attempt. Indeed there is a buccaneering air sometimes in the twist of his glance not altogether suitable to a family solicitor. On this bright October morning, Peacey, the head clerk, informs him at once that he hears bad accounts of Alguazils preferred.

Edward Voysey has little of his father in him, and that little is undermost. It is a refined face, but self-consciousness takes the place of imagination, and in suppressing traits of brutality in his character it looks as if the young man had suppressed his sense of humor, too. But whether or no, that would not be much in evidence now, for Edward is obviously going through some experience which is scaring him.

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Mr. Voysey. Now sit down. I've given you a bad forty-eight hours, it seems. Well, I've been anxious about you. Never mind, we'll thresh the things out now. Go through the two accounts.

Edward [*his feelings choking him*]. I hoped you were playing some trick on me.

They go over the accounts together. An unusual state of affairs is found. Mrs. Murberry receives her income regularly from the firm, but there is no record of any capital which produces it. Records of capital representing the Hatherly trust are only fragmentary. Young Hatherly will come of age in about five years, when there will be due him some twenty-six thousand pounds.

Ed. Thank you for showing me these, sir. Shall I put them back in your safe now?

Mr. V. Yes, you'd better. There's the key. [EDWARD *reaches for the bunch, his face hidden.*] Put them down. Your hand shakes . . . why, you might have been drinking . . . I'll put them away later. It's no use having hysterics, Edward. Look the trouble in the face.

[EDWARD'S *only answer is to go to the fire, as far from his father as the room allows. And there he leans on the mantelpiece, his shoulders heaving.*]

Mr. V. I'm sorry, my dear boy. I wouldn't tell you if I could help it.

Ed. I can't believe it. And that you should be telling it to me.

Mr. V. Let your feelings go, and get that part of the business over. It isn't pleasant, I know. It isn't pleasant to inflict it on you.

Mr. Voysey points out, however, that he is not breaking his heart over the matter. He says that it was not he who began the mischief, but his father before him. It was his inheritance. He had hoped that it wasn't to be Edward's also. He has done only what he had to do. No immediate danger threatens. No client has ever lost a shilling of his income.

Ed. Father, I m not thinking ill of you . . . that is, I'm trying not to. But won't you explain how you're justified——?

Mr. V. In putting our affairs in order.

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Ed. Are you doing that?

Mr. V. What else?

Ed. [*starting patiently to examine the matter*]. How bad were things when you first came to control them?

Mr. V. Oh, I forget.

Ed. You can't forget.

Mr. V. Well . . . pretty bad.

Edward cannot see why it should have taken so long to straighten out a difficulty that began through "muddlement," and why such a comparatively recent trust as Hatherly's should have been broken into. "What could be safer?" asks Mr. Voysey. He says it is his practice to reinvest his clients' money when it is entirely under his control. The difference between the income the money has to bring to them and the income it is actually bringing him he utilizes in his "endeavor to fill up the deficit in the firm's accounts."

Mr. V. Oh . . . why is it so hard for a man to see clearly beyond the letter of the law? Will you consider a moment, Edward, the position in which I found myself? Was I to see my father ruined and disgraced without lifting a finger to help him? . . . Not to mention the interest of the clients. I paid back to the man who would have lost most by my father's mistakes every penny of his money.

Still Edward cannot see why, in thirty years, either the system did not come to grief or else solvency was not achieved. He protests that he cannot perpetuate this dishonesty. Mr. Voysey returns that he shan't mind exposure; he won't blush in his coffin, but that Edward had better consider the feelings of his brothers and sisters.

Mr. V. My dear Edward, you've lived a quiet, humdrum life up to now, with your books and your philosophy and your agnosticism and your ethics of this and your ethics of that . . . dear me, these are the sort of garden oats which young men seem to sow nowadays . . . and you've never before been brought face to face with any really vital question. Now don't make a fool of yourself just through inexperience.

A last flicker of rebellion from Edward breaks down Mr. Voysey's caution and he lets fly with a vengeance. He declares he won't have all his work go to smash simply

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because of his son's scruples. His son shall do as he tells him. He had to make the same choice. If Edward runs away from it he is a coward. He concludes a long speech by saying that he has carried his cross pretty successfully, and that it has made a happy man of him, a better, stronger man than skulking about in shame and in fear of his life ever made his poor father.

During this talk Edward loses sympathy with his father and evidently determines not to accept the Voysey inheritance.

The Voysey dining-room at Chislehurst, when children and grandchildren are visiting, is dining table and very little else. And at this moment in the evening, when five or six men are sprawling back in their chairs, and the air is clouded with smoke, it is a very typical specimen of the middle-class English domestic temple; the daily sacrifice consummated, the acolytes dismissed, the women safely in the drawing-room, and the chief priests of it taking their surfeited ease round the dessert-piled altar.

In front of the fire—since that is the post of vantage—stands at this moment Major Booth Voysey. He is the second son, of the age that it is necessary for a Major to be, and of an appearance that many ordinary Majors in ordinary regiments are. He went into the army because he thought it would be like a schoolboy's idea of it; and, being there, he does his little all to keep it so.

Mr. Colpus, the vicar of the parish, is a harmless enough anachronism except for the waste of £400 a year in which his stipend involves the community. Leaving most of his parochial work to an energetic curate, he devotes his serious attention to the composition of two sermons a week. They deal with the difficulties of living the Christian life as experienced by people who have nothing else to do.

Mr. George Booth is as gay an old gentleman as can be found in Chislehurst. An only son, his father left him at the age of twenty-five a fortune amounting to two hundred thousand pounds. Since that time he has been bent on nothing but enjoying himself. He has even remained a bachelor with that object. Money has given him all that he wants.

The Major has just announced that he is hot and strong

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for conscription. Mr. George Booth protests that the gentlemen of England will not allow themselves to be herded with a lot of "low fellers" and be made to carry guns. Mr. Voysey is rather fond of taking down his son, Booth.

Mr. V. [*as he taps* MR. BOOTH *with the nutcrackers*]. Help yourself, George, and drink to your godson's health. Long may he keep his chest notes! Never heard him on parade, have you?

When the party of men has been somewhat broken up Miss Alice Maitland returns to the room. She is a young lady of any age to thirty. Nor need her appearance alter for the next fifteen years; since her nature is healthy and well-balanced. She possesses indeed the sort of athletic chastity which is a characteristic charm of northern spinsterhood. It mayn't be a pretty face, but it has alertness and humor; and the resolute eyes and eyebrows are a more innocent edition of Mr. Voysey's who is her uncle.

Alice [*looking at* EDWARD *with her head on one side and her face more humorous than ever*]. Edward, why have you given up proposing to me?

[*He starts, flushes, and then won't be outdone in humor.*]

Ed. One can't go on proposing forever.

Alice [*reasonably*]. Why not? Have you seen any one you like better?

Ed. No.

Alice. Well, I miss it.

Ed. What satisfaction did you find in refusing me?

Alice [*as she weighs the matter*]. I find satisfaction in feeling that I'm wanted.

Ed. Without any intention of giving yourself . . . throwing yourself away.

Alice [*teasing his sudden earnestness*]. Ah, now you come from mere vanity to serious questions.

Ed. Mine were always serious questions to you.

Alice. That's a fault I find in you, Edward: all questions are serious to you. I call you a perfect little pocket-guide to life . . . all questions and answers; what to eat, drink, and avoid, what to believe and what to say . . . all in the same type, the same importance attached to each.

Ed. [*sententiously*]. Well—everything matters.

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Alice [*making a face*]. D'you plan out every detail of your life—every step you take—every mouthful?

Ed. That would be waste of thought. One must lay down principles.

Alice. I prefer my plan, I always do what I know I want to do. Crack me another nut.

Ed. Haven't you had enough?

Alice. I know I want one more.

[*He cracks another, with a sigh which sounds ridiculous in that connection.*]

Ed. Well, if you've never had to decide anything very serious. . . .

Alice [*with great gravity*]. Everything's serious.

Ed. Everything isn't vital.

Alice [*skilfully manœuvring the subject*]. I've answered vital questions. I knew that I didn't want to marry you—each time.

Ed. Oh, then you didn't just make a rule of saying no.

Alice. As you proposed—on principle? No, I always gave you a fair chance. I'll give you one now if you like.

[*He rouses himself to play up to this outrageous piece of flirting.*]

Ed. I'm not to be caught.

Alice. Edward, how rude you are. [*She eats her nut contentedly.*]

Ed. Do other men propose to you?

Alice. Such a thing may have happened—when I was young. Perhaps it might even now if I were to allow it.

Ed. You encourage me shamelessly.

Alice. It isn't every one who proposes on principle. As a rule a man does it because he can't help himself. And then to be said no to—hurts.

Before the day is over Edward has another talk with his father and agrees to remain in the firm on condition that they shall really try to put things straight. Mr. Voysey explains in regard to his own income that he spends what he thinks it well to spend, his reputation for wealth being what maintains the confidence of the clients, and opulence giving one that wonderful financier's touch.

Mr. Voysey got a severe chill that very day, the beginning of a lingering illness which ended with his death.

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Edward took advantage of the assembling of the family at the occasion of the funeral to announce the surprising and painful news relative to the inheritance.

Booth [*in a tone of mitigated thunder*]. Why will there be no money?

Ed. [*letting himself go*]. Because every penny by right belongs to those clients whom our father spent his life in defrauding. When I say defrauding, I mean it in its worst sense . . swindling . . thieving. I have been in the swim of it for the past year . . oh, you don't know the sink of iniquity . . and therefore I mean to collect every penny, any money that you can give me; put the firm into bankruptcy; pay back all these people what we can. I'll stand my trial . . it'll come to that with me . . and as soon as possible. [*He pauses, partly for breath, and glares at them all.*] Are none of you going to speak? Quite right, what is there to be said! [*Then with a gentle afterthought.*] I'm sorry to hurt you, mother.

[*The* VOYSEY *family is simply buried deep by this avalanche of horror.* MRS. VOYSEY, *though, who has been watching* EDWARD *closely, says very calmly.*]

Mrs. Voysey. I can't hear quite all you say, but I guess what it is. You don't hurt me, Edward—I have known of this for a long time.

Ed. [*with almost a cry*]. Oh, mother, did he know you knew?

Mrs. V. What do you say?

Trenchard [*collected and dry*]. I may as well tell you, Edward, I suspected everything wasn't right about the time of my last quarrel with my father. Of course, I took care not to pursue my suspicions. Was father aware that you knew, mother?

Mrs. V. We never discussed it. There was once a great danger—when you were all younger—of his being found out. But we never discussed it.

Ed. [*swallowing a fresh bitterness*]. I'm glad it isn't such a shock to all of you.

Hugh [*alive to a dramatic aspect of the matter*]. My God! before the earth has settled on his grave!

Ed. I thought it wrong to postpone telling you.

The word swindling having spelt itself out in Honor's mind, she at last gives way to a burst of piteous grief.

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Honor. Oh, poor papa—poor papa!

Edward explains that every member of the family must return the capital settled on them by their father. Booth exclaims that will mean beggary for all of them. Edward retorts that the money was stolen. Here Trenchard, the lawyer, shows the ready grasp of a trained mind that was naturally keen. He would like to know to whom exactly they owe reparation, to which account, for instance, Booth's money should be returned.

For the moment Edward is sidetracked. Tregoning, who is present as the fiancé of Ethel Voysey, says that his fortune was in Mr. Voysey's charge. Edward seems to think no trace of this capital exists. Trenchard finds it very curious that their father should have "evolved that fiction about his father." He says he remembers the old man, who was as honest as the day. He attributes it to the touch of the artist in every criminal.

Why Edward stayed in the firm, once he knew, is more than Trenchard can see, but Edward says he thought he could prevent things from getting any worse and that he has given his own money to make some of the smaller accounts right. Trenchard, who fully comprehends the risk Edward ran, has a passing feeling of admiration.

The firm's deficit is between two and three hundred thousand pounds. Booth avows that he feels less concerned about the clients' money than the terrible blow to the family that the exposure is going to strike. In spite of this keen sense of honor he does not wish to give up anything. Edward assures him that exposure cannot be averted, as he has no intention of going on lying and cheating to pay their interest in the lie and the cheat.

It does not take Booth long to turn up the argument that the clients must be kept receiving their natural income. Of course, he says, if Edward is not competent to carry on the business that is another matter. The departure of Booth and Trenchard leaves Hugh at his ease to talk with Edward.

Ed. It's strange the number of people who believe you can do right by means which they know to be wrong.

Hugh [*taking great interest in this*]. Come, what do we know about right and wrong? Let's say legal and illegal. You're so down on the Governor because he has tres-

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passed against the etiquette of your own profession. But now he's dead . . and if there weren't the disgrace to think of . . it's no use the rest of us pretending to feel him a criminal, because we don't. Which just shows that money . . and property——

[*At this point he becomes conscious that* ALICE MAITLAND *is standing behind him, her eyes fixed on his brother.*]

Alice thinks it won't hurt Edward so much to stand up to the blame as the fault was his father's. Edward is a little puzzled at this, but says he is hurt enough as it is. She regards it as a mercy that Honor learned of the affair just at this time, as she can grieve for her father's death and his disgrace at the same time. The one grief should lessen the other. As for the family's money, Alice doubts if the advertisement would repay the cost of giving up everything with a flourish of trumpets.

Ed. [*very serious*]. But when one thinks how the money was obtained!

Alice. When one thinks how most money is obtained!

Ed. They've not earned it.

Alice [*her eyes humorous*]. If they had, they might have given it you and earned more. Did I ever tell you what my guardian said to me when I came of age?

Ed. I'm thankful your money's not been in danger.

Alice. It might have been, but I was made to look after it myself . . much against my will. My guardian was a person of great character and no principles, the best and most lovable man I've ever met . . I'm sorry you never knew him, Edward . . and he said once to me: you've no right to your money. You've not earned it or deserved it in any way. Therefore, don't be surprised or annoyed if any enterprising person tries to get it from you. He has at least as much right to it as you have . . if he can use it better, he has more right. Shocking sentiments, aren't they? No respectable man of business could own to them. But I'm not so sorry for some of these clients as you are, Edward.

Edward shakes his head at these paradoxes. He is ashamed to walk into his office, he says, but he will hold his head high in prison.

Alice. Edward, I'm afraid you're feeling heroic.

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Ed. I!

Alice. Don't be so proud of your misfortune. You looked quite like Booth for the moment. [*This effectually removes the starch.*] It will be very stupid to send you to prison, and you must do your best to keep out. [*She goes on very practically.*] We were discussing if anything could be done for these one or two people who'll be beggared.

Ed. Yes, Alice. I'm sorry nothing can be done for them.

Alice. It's a pity.

Ed. I suppose I was feeling heroic. I didn't mean to.

[*He has become a little like a child with her.*]

Alice. That's the worst of acting on principle . . one begins thinking of one's attitude instead of the use of what one is doing.

Ed. I'm exposing this fraud on principle.

Alice. Perhaps that's what's wrong.

Ed. Wrong!

Alice. My dear Edward, if people are to be ruined . . !

To his mind, these unfortunates must be ruined. There is no way out of it. "On principle," she suggests. The yeast of her suggestion begins to work slowly, perversely at first. He observes it had already occurred to Booth that he might quietly cheat the firm back into credit. Presently his face lights a little. There is something he could do, though it is illegal.

Alice. So much the better, perhaps. Oh, I'm lawless by birthright, being a woman.

Ed. I could take the money that's in my father's name, and use it only to put right the smaller accounts. It'd take a few months to do it well . . and cover the tracks. That'd be necessary.

Alice. Then you'd give yourself up as you'd meant to do now?

Ed. Yes . . practically.

Alice. It'd be worse for you then at the trial?

Ed. [*with a touch of another sort of pride*]. You said that was my affair.

She is hurt at this. He says that she has taken his principles from him and the least she can do is to give him advice in exchange. Shall he follow this course. She replies that he must decide for himself. It would mean ly-

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ing and shuffling, and he fears he should fail. Does she want him to do this. For answer she dares only put out her hand. He takes it.

Alice. Oh, my dear . . cousin!

Ed. [*excitedly*]. My people will have to hold their tongues. I needn't have told them all this to-day.

Alice. Don't tell them the rest . . they won't understand. I shall be jealous if you tell them.

Ed. [*looking at her as she at him*]. Well, you've the right to be. This deed . . it's not done yet . . is your property.

Alice. Thank you. I've always wanted to have something useful to my credit . . and I'd almost given up hoping.

[*Then suddenly his face changes, his voice changes, and he grips the hand he is holding so tightly as to hurt her.*]

Ed. Alice, if my father's story were true . . he must have begun like this. Trying to do the right thing in the wrong way . . then doing the wrong thing. . then bringing himself to what he was . . and so me to this. [*He flings away from her.*] No, Alice, I won't do it. I daren't take that first step down. It's a worse risk than any failure. Think . . I might succeed.

[ALICE *stands very still, looking at him.*]

Alice. It's a big risk. Well . . I'll take it.

[*He turns to her in wonder.*]

Ed. You?

Alice. I'll risk your becoming a bad man. That's a big risk for me.

[*He understands, and is calmed and made happy.*]

Ed. Then there is no more to be said, is there?

Alice. Not now. [*As she drops this gentle hint she hears something—the hall door opening.*] Here's Booth back again.

Ed. [*with a really mischievous grin*]. He'll be so glad he's convinced me.

Month succeeds month without disquieting developments. Finally, when December has come, old Peacey, the head clerk, shows his teeth. He has always had two hundred pounds at Christmas and will not accept Edward's excuse that there are no longer any illicit profits to share.

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Edward tells him he is worse than a thief; he is content that others should steal for him. "Who isn't?" replies Peacey.

Ed. Ah, Peacey, I perceive that you study sociology. Well, that's too big a question to enter into now. The application of the present portion of it is that I have for the moment, at some inconvenience to myself, ceased to receive stolen goods and therefore am in a position to throw a stone at you. I have thrown it.

Peacey still thinks the secret is worth the price. Edward suggests that perhaps some one will pay it to him. The gentle blackmailer is finally outfaced. But Peacey does not hesitate to predict that the fascination of swindling will get the better of Edward as it did of his father, who once had everything straight and then went back to the old way. At first he was as sour and snappy as Edward, but later he became very pleasant and generous to every one.

Hugh comes to insist that Edward take his money for the clients. The money has carried a curse with it. He wants to be free from his advantages and see what he is worth in himself, whether he even exists or is only a pretence of a man animated by an income. That he cannot return to nature on the London pavements, he is willing to agree; nor can he do so in England at all, which is nothing but a big back garden.

Ed. And what does Beatrice say to your emigrating to the backwoods . . if that is exactly what you mean?

Hugh. Now that we're separating——

Ed. [*taken aback*]. What?

Hugh. We mean to separate.

Ed. This is the first I've heard of it.

Hugh. Beatrice is making some money by her books, so it has become possible.

Having turned the question of Hugh's capital over in his mind, Edward says he shall not need the money from him; all the good has been done that he wanted to do; no one will be beggared now, so why should Hugh be? He hopes that Hugh holds his tongue about the office affairs. It isn't safe not to do so. Instead of answering, Hugh asks when he will be quit of the beastly business. It must be a

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fearfully wearying business, with the possibility always hanging over him of a policeman knocking at the door any moment . . so to speak.

Ed. [*appreciating the figure of speech*]. Any moment. I take no precautions. I suppose that's why he doesn't come. At first I listened for him, day by day. Then I said to myself . . next week. But a year has gone by and more. I've ceased expecting to hear the knock at all.

Hugh. But look here . . is all this worth while?

Ed. [*supremely ironical*]. My dear Hugh, what a silly question!

Hugh [*very seriously*]. But have you the right to make a mean thing of your life like this?

Ed. Does my life matter?

Hugh. Well . . of course!

Ed. I find no evidence to convince me of it. The world that you talk about so finely is using me up. A little wantonly . . a little needlessly, I do think. But she knows her own damn business . . or so she says, if you try to teach it her. And why should I trouble to fit myself for better work than she has given me to do . . nursing fools' money?

Hugh [*responding at once to this vein*]. Edward, we must turn this world upside down. It's her stupidity that drives me mad. We all want a lesson in values. We're never taught what is worth having and what isn't. Why should your real happiness be sacrificed to the sham happiness which people have invested in the firm?

Ed. I suppose their money means such happiness to them as they understand.

Hugh departs, and the next moment, so to speak, the policeman's knock rings echoing through the House of Voysey.

In comes old Mr. George Booth, older, too, in looks than he was eighteen months back. Very dandyishly dressed, he still seems by no means so happy as his clothes might be making him. He jumps at the slam of a door, and then he frowns at Edward in a frightened sort of way. He takes a chair and occupies the next minute or two carefully disposing of his hat and gloves.

Ed. Are you feeling all right again?

Mr. Booth. A bit dyspeptic. How are you?

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Ed. Quite well, thanks.

Mr. B. I'm glad . . I'm glad. [*He now proceeds to cough a little, hesitating painfully.*] I'm afraid this isn't very pleasant business I've come upon.

Ed. D'you want to go to law with any one?

Mr. B. No . . oh, no. I'm getting too old to quarrel.

Ed. A pleasant symptom.

Mr. B. [*with a final effort*]. I mean to withdraw my securities from the custody of your firm . . [*and he adds apologetically*] with the usual notice, of course.

It would be difficult to describe what Edward feels at this moment. Perhaps something of the shock that the relief of death may be as an end to pain so long endured that it has been half forgotten. He asks very quietly, without a sign of emotion, why Mr. Booth has made this decision.

Relieved that the worst is over, Mr. Booth says that he has never been able to feel that implicit confidence in Edward's ability which he had in his father's. It is hardly to be expected. He can say that without unduly depreciating Edward. Men like his father are few and far between. As far as Mr. Booth knows, things proceed at this office as they have always done, but . . since his old friend's death he has not been happy about his affairs.

Ed. [*speaking as it is his duty to*]. I think you need be under no apprehension. . .

Mr. B. I daresay not. But that isn't the point. Now, for the first time in my long life, I am worried about money affairs; and I don't like the feeling. The possession of money has always been a pleasure to me . . and for what are perhaps my last years I don't wish that to be otherwise. You must remember you have practically my entire property unreservedly in your control.

Ed. Perhaps we can arrange to hand you over the reins to an extent which will ease your mind, and at the same time not . .

Mr. B. I thought of that. Believe me, I have every wish not to slight unduly your father's son. I have not moved in the matter for eighteen months. I have not been able to make up my mind to. Really, one feels a little helpless . . and the transaction of business requires more energy than . . But I saw my doctor yesterday,

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Edward, and he told me . . well, it was a warning. And so I felt it my duty at once to . . especially as I made up my mind to it some time ago. [*He comes to the end of this havering at last, and adds.*] In point of fact, Edward, more than a year before your father died I had quite decided that my affairs could never be with you as they were with him.

[EDWARD *starts almost out of his chair, his face pale, his eyes black.*]

Ed. Did he know that?

Mr. B. [*resenting this new attitude*]. I think I never said it in so many words. But he may easily have guessed.

Almost shuddering at the possibility of dreadful knowledge, Edward protests that his father never guessed. Then with a sudden fresh impulse he says he hopes Mr. Booth will not carry out his design. Mr. Booth, however, has quite made up his mind. He thinks Edward is making a fearful fuss about a very simple matter. He is surprised, in fact, at Edward's lack of dignity.

Ed. True . . I have no dignity. Will you walk off with your papers now?

Mr. B. What notice is usual?

Ed. To a good solicitor, five minutes. Ten to a poor one.

Mr. B. You'll have to explain matters a bit to me.

[*Now* EDWARD *settles to his desk again; really with a certain grim enjoyment of the prospect.*]

Ed. Yes, I had better. Well, Mr. Booth, how much do you think you're worth?

Mr. B. [*easily*]. I couldn't say off hand.

Ed. But you've a rough idea?

Mr. B. To be sure.

Ed. You'll get not quite half that out of us.

Mr. B. [*precisely*]. I think I said I had made up my mind to withdraw the whole amount.

Ed. You should have made up your mind sooner.

Mr. B. I don't in the least understand you, Edward.

Ed. A great part of your capital doesn't exist.

Mr. B. [*with some irritation*]. Nonsense! It must exist. [*He scans* EDWARD'S *set face in vain.*] You mean that it won't be prudent to realize? You can hand over the securities. I don't want to reinvest simply because——

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Ed. I can't hand over what I haven't got.

[*This sentence falls on the old man's ears like a knell.*]

Mr. B. Is anything . . wrong?

Ed. [*grim and patient*]. How many more times am I to say that we have robbed you of nearly half your property?

Mr. B. [*his senses failing him*]. Say that again.

Ed. It's quite true.

Mr. B. My money . . gone?

Ed. Yes.

Mr. B. [*clutching at a straw of anger*]. You've been the thief . . you . . you . . ?

Ed. I wouldn't tell you if I could help it . . my father.

[*That actually calls the old man back to something like dignity and self-possession. He thumps on* EDWARD'S *table furiously.*]

Mr. B. I'll make you prove that.

[*And now* EDWARD *buries his face in his arms and just goes off into hysterics.*]

Ed. Oh, you've fired a mine!

Mr. B. [*scolding him well*]. Slandering your dead father . . and lying to me, revenging yourself by frightening me . . because I detest you.

Ed. Why . . haven't I thanked you for putting an end to all my troubles? I do . . I promise you I do.

Mr. B. [*shouting, and his sudden courage failing as he shouts*]. Prove this . . prove it to me! I'm not to be frightened so easily. One can't lose half of all one has and then be told of it in two minutes . . sitting at a table. [*His voice falls off to a piteous whimper.*]

Ed. [*quietly now, and kindly*]. If my father had told you this in plain words you'd have believed him.

Mr. B. [*bowing his head*]. Yes.

[EDWARD *looks at the poor old thing with great pity.*]

Ed. What on earth did you want to withdraw your account for? You need never have known . . you could have died happy. Settling with all those charities in your will would certainly have smashed us up. But proving your will is many years off yet, we'll hope.

Mr. B. [*pathetic and bewildered*]. I don't understand. No, I don't understand . . because your father . . But I must understand, Edward.

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Ed. Don't shock yourself trying to understand my father, for you never will. Pull yourself together, Mr. Booth. After all, this isn't a vital matter to you. It's not even as if you had a family to consider . . . like some of the others.

Edward informs him that his money has not been specially selected for pilfering.

Mr. B. [*his voice breaks, he appeals pitifully*]. But by you, Edward . . say it's by you.

Ed. [*unable to resist his quiet revenge*]. I've not the ability or the personality for such work, Mr. Booth . . nothing but principles, which forbid me even to lie to you.

[*The old gentleman draws a long breath, and then speaks with great awe, blending into grief.*]

Mr. B. I think your father is in hell . . I'd have gone there myself to save him from it. I loved him very truly. How he could have had the heart! We were friends for nearly fifty years. Am I to think now he only cared for me to cheat me?

Ed. [*venturing the comfort of an explanation*]. No . . he didn't value money as you do.

Mr. B. [*with sudden shrill logic*]. But he took it. What d'you mean by that?

[EDWARD *leans back in his chair and changes the tenor of their talk.*]

Ed. Well, you're master of the situation now. What are you going to do?

Mr. B. To get my money back.

Ed. No, that's gone.

Mr. B. Then give me what's left, and——

Ed. Are you going to prosecute?

Mr. B. [*shifting uneasily in his chair*]. Oh, dear . . is that necessary? Can't somebody else do that? I thought the law——

Ed. You need not prosecute, you know.

Mr. B. What'll happen if I don't?

Ed. What do you suppose I'm doing here now?

Mr. B. [*as if he were being asked a riddle*]. I don't know.

Ed. [*earnestly*]. I'm trying to straighten things a little. I'm trying to undo what my father did . . to do again what he undid. It's a poor, dull sort of work now . .

Mr. Booth does not find it easy to believe in that office.

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He hates to be vindictive, it's not his nature. But the sum is not small. And he does not see that one is called upon to forgive crimes. He demands that a check be sent him at once for what he has left.

Although Mr. Booth pleaded a headache as excuse for not dining with the Voysey family on Christmas, he did come to tell Edward of his decision. He couldn't think the matter out alone, and so he talked it over with Mr. Colpus, to whom it was a terrible shock, as it was also to his wife.

Ed. [*coolly*]. So I conclude you mean to prosecute. For if you don't, you've given the Colpuses a lot of unnecessary pain . . and inflicted a certain amount of loss by telling them.

Mr. B. [*naïvely*]. I never thought of that. No, Edward, I have decided not to prosecute.

[EDWARD *hides his face for a moment.*]

Ed. And I've been hoping to escape! Well . . it can't be helped. [*And he sets his teeth.*]

Mr. B. [*with touching solemnity*]. I think I could not bear to see the family I have loved brought to such disgrace.

Ed. So you'll compound my felony?

Mr. B. [*a little nervously*]. That's only your joke!

Mr. Booth considers Edward's effort to restore the firm's credit very striking. For a moment Edward sees a dazzling hope in the desire of his father's old friend to tide him over this difficulty. Mr. Booth is willing to help Edward by not prosecuting, provided Edward, besides returning the balance of his money at once, will pay interest on the capital which ought to exist and does not, and will also pay back this missing capital in regular instalments.

Edward goes off into peals of laughter, much to the alarm of Mr. Booth, who has never thought him oversane. He asks if Mr. Colpus and all the other Christian gentlemen will demand pounds of flesh.

Mr. B. Don't be hysterical. I demand what is mine . . . in such quantities as you can afford.

[EDWARD'S *laughter gives way to the deepest anger of which he is capable.*]

Ed. I'm giving my soul and body to restoring you and

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the rest of you to your precious money bags . . and you'll wring me dry. Won't you? Won't you?

Mr. B. Now be reasonable. Argue the point quietly.

Ed. Go to the devil, sir!

[*And with that he turns away from the flabbergasted old gentleman.*]

Mr. B. Don't be rude.

Ed. [*his anger vanishing*]. I beg your pardon.

Mr. B. You're excited. Take time to think of it. I'm reasonable.

Ed. [*his sense of humor returning*]. Most! Most! [*There is a knock at the door.*] Come in! Come in!

Having explained his conception of fair dealing, Mr. Booth goes his way.

The news that Hugh and Beatrice are to separate is broken to the Major, who raises a formidable rumpus. The difficulty seems to be that Hugh cares nothing about earning money, and is quite happy as long as he can potter away at his art. This art does not in any way indemnify Beatrice for deprivations.

Booth. You can't say you don't want money any more than you can say you don't want bread.

Beatrice [*as she breaks off her cotton*]. It's when one has known what it is to be a little short of both——

[*Now the Major spreads himself, and begins to be very wise, while* HUGH, *to whom this is more intolerable than all, can only clutch his hair.*]

Booth. You know I never considered art a very good profession for you, Hugh. And you won't even stick to one department of it. It's a profession that gets people into very bad habits, I consider. Couldn't you take up something else? You could still do those wood-cuts in your spare time to amuse yourself.

Hugh [*commenting on this with two deliberate shouts of simulated mirth*]. Ha! Ha!

Booth. [*sublimely superior*]. Well, it wouldn't much matter if you didn't do them at all!

Bea. [*subtly*]. Booth, there speaks the true critic.

Booth. [*deprecating any title to omniscience*]. Well, I don't pretend to know much about art, but——

Hugh. It would matter to me. There speaks the artist.

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Bea. The arrogance of the artist.

Hugh. We have a right to be arrogant.

Bea. Good workmen are humble.

Hugh. And look to their wages.

Bea. Well, I'm only a workman.

With that she breaks the contact of this quiet, deadly, hopeless little quarrel by turning her head away.

Mrs. Voysey thinks the young people are very foolish to want to separate. She says they would soon come back to each other and be glad to; that people can't fight against nature for long; and marriage is a natural state . . once you're married. They are determined to separate, however, as soon as they can command money enough to live apart.

When ten o'clock comes Mrs. Voysey retires and there is a general breaking up of the circle.

Beatrice and Alice are left with Edward. He tells them of a discovery that he has made; his father saved the firm once, only to start again fifteen years later. He says one cannot believe it was merely through weakness.

Bea. [*with artistic enthusiasm*]. Of course not. He was a great financier . . a man of imagination. He had to find scope for his abilities or die. He despised these fat little clients living so snugly on their unearned incomes . . and put them and their money to the best use he could.

Ed. [*shaking his head solemnly*]. That's all a fine phrase for robbery.

[BEATRICE *turns her clever face to him and begins to follow up her subject keenly.*]

Bea. My dear Edward . . I understand you've been robbing your rich clients for the benefit of the poor ones?

Alice [*who hasn't missed a word*]. That's true.

Ed. [*gently*]. Well . . we're all a bit in debt to the poor, aren't we?

Bea. Quite so. And you don't possess, and your father didn't possess that innate sense of the sacredness of property . . . [*she enjoys that phrase*]—which alone can make a truly honest man. Nor did the man possess it who picked my pocket last Friday week . . nor does the taxgatherer . . . nor do I. Your father's free-

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dom from prejudice was tempered by a taste for Power and Display. Yours is by Charity. But that's all the difference I'll admit between you. Robbery! . . it's a beautiful word.

Ed. [*a little pained by as much of this as he takes to be serious*]. I think he might have told me the truth.

Bea. Perhaps he didn't know it! Would you have believed him?

Ed. Perhaps not. But I loved him.

Finally, when Alice and Edward are left alone, he breaks the news to her that Mr. Booth has betrayed him to the vicar. Mrs. Colpus, who knows how not to keep a secret, overheard all, he says; and the smash has come. Edward has done his best and his conscience is clear, though it may go hard with him if it is found out that he has pulled half a dozen people out of the fire.

Alice scolds him a little for having allowed himself to be unhappy. He shouldn't neglect his happiness, she says, any more than he should neglect to wash his face. She whispers the awful words that, truthfully, he was once a bit of a prig. He has got over that, but he doesn't yet see that this cursed work that he has before him was meant to do much for him. She is glad to hear that he has lost his temper once or twice, been brutal, it is his own wicked nature coming out. She wants him to be his real self.

Ed. I can't let myself be glad and live. There's the future to think of. And I'm so afraid of that. I must pretend I don't care . . even to myself . . even to you.

Alice [*her mocking at an end*]. What is it you fear most about the future . . not just obviously unpleasant things?

Ed. They'll put me in prison.

Alice. Perhaps.

Ed. Who'll be the man who comes out?

Alice. Yourself.

Ed. No, no! I'm a coward. I can't stand alone, it's too lonely. I need affection . . I need friends. I cling to people that I don't care for deeply . . just for the comfort of it. I've no home of my own. Every house that welcomes me now I like to think of as something of a home. And I know that this disgrace in store will leave me for a long time or a short time . . homeless.

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[*There he sits, shaken.* ALICE *waits a moment, not taking her eyes from him, then speaks.*]

Alice. There's something else I want to scold you for. You've still given up proposing to me. Certainly that shows a lack of courage . . and of perseverance. Or is it the loss of what I always considered a very laudable ambition?

[EDWARD *is hardly able to trust his ears. Then he looks into her face, and his thankfulness frames itself into a single sentence.*]

Ed. Will you marry me?

Alice. Yes, Edward.

[*For a minute he just holds his breath with happiness. But he shakes himself free of it almost savagely.*]

Ed. No! no! no! We mustn't be stupid. I'm sorry I asked for that.

Alice [*with serene strength*]. I'm glad that you want me. While I live . . where I am will be Home.

Ed. [*struggling with himself*]. No, it's too late. If you'd said yes before I came into my inheritance . . perhaps I shouldn't have given myself to the work. So be glad that it's too late. I am.

Alice [*happily*]. There was never any chance of my marrying you when you were only a well-principled prig. I didn't want you . . and I don't believe you really wanted me. Now you do. And you must always take what you want.

Ed. [*turning to her again*]. My dear, what have we to start life upon . . to build our house upon? Poverty . . and prison for me.

Alice [*mischievous*]. Edward, you seem to think that all the money in the world was invested in your precious firm. I have four hundred a year of my own. At least let that tempt you.

[EDWARD *catches her in his arms with a momentary little burst of passion.*]

Ed. You're tempting me.

She did not resist, but nevertheless he breaks away from her, disappointed with himself. She goes on quietly, serenely. She asks if she shall hinder or help his life, and says that if he doesn't think her his equal as woman to man they'll never speak of the subject again, but if he does to

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look at her and make his choice. She puts out her hand frankly and he takes it as frankly. Then she sits beside him, and quite cheerfully changes the subject.

It is Alice's belief that if Edward surrenders himself entirely he'll find the creditors powerless against him. He thinks himself that if they could all meet and agree they might syndicate themselves and keep him at work for life striving to put things right. She thinks he should wish for nothing more.

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THE THUNDERBOLT*

By Sir Arthur Wing Pinero

First played in London at the St. James Theatre on May 9, 1908.

Argument: Upon the death of a wealthy bachelor his brothers and sister, from whom he had been estranged, hope to obtain his property in the apparent absence of a will. They learn that he had a daughter, but intend to keep the property if they can. The problem is whether the discovery of a will or some other development will thwart them.

The day after the death of Edward Mortimore, a bachelor and wealthy brewer of Linchpool, a city of the English midlands, his three brothers and sister assemble in the library of his house to consult with solicitors regarding the administration of the estate.

The brothers are James, builder and contractor, a burly, thick-set man, a little over fifty, with iron-gray hair and beard; Stephen, editor and proprietor of the Singlehampton *Times and Mirror*, forty-nine, bald, stooping, with red rims to his eyes, wearing spectacles, and Thaddeus, professor of music, a meek, careworn man of two-and-forty.

The wives of the brothers have accompanied them, and Rose, the sister, has brought her husband, Colonel Arthur Everard Ponting, who is fifty-five, short, stout, and apoplectic. Rose herself is forty-four, fashionably dressed and coiffured and with a suspiciously blooming complexion.

Edward was the oldest of the family. For a time he was a bit of a scamp, according to James. He cut himself adrift from Singlehampton six-and-twenty years ago, and after ten years returned to the neighboring town of Linchpool, where he bought out a brewery, but he never recog-

*Published by Walter H. Baker & Co., Boston.

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nized his family except by a curt nod if he happened to pass one of them.

Mr. Vallance, the young solicitor, inquires if it seems reasonably probable that the deceased wished his estate to pass to those who are present. James assures him that it is, for at the last it appeared that Edward kept a soft place in his heart for them: he sent for them before the end and shook hands with them, showing that old sores were healed. Mr. Elkin, an elderly, white-haired man, who was Edward's solicitor, tells them, however, that it was he who persuaded their brother to send for them. He is much puzzled that there should be no will, and thinks it not unlikely that some other solicitor was called in to draw a will behind his back.

Edward's daughter, Helen Thornhill as she is called, is twenty-four years old. Her mother died when she was a child, and she has studied painting in Paris. As matters stand, she is entirely unprovided for, and Mr. Elkin tells them that there was the utmost affection between the father and daughter. The wives of the brothers suggest that some sort of allowance might be made for her, though they see no reason why she should keep on with the art school just because her father was in the habit of squandering money on her recklessly.

Thaddeus's wife, Phyllis, who has taken no part in what has been going on, suddenly rises. She is a woman of thirty-five, white-faced and faded, but with decided traces of beauty. Everybody looks at her in surprise. She starts to speak falteringly, but gains firmness as she proceeds. If they come into Edward Mortimore's money, she says, they mustn't let it make an atom of difference to the child. The others greet her remarks with expressions of contemptuous surprise. She persists; they couldn't stint the girl after pocketing her money.

Thaddeus supports Phyllis. If they come into Ned's money they come into his debts. Why Ned didn't make the girl independent, he agrees with Mr. Elkin, is a mystery. He and his wife leave, and Mr. Vallance proposes to Mr. Elkin that they shall have a private conference in another room.

The "family" are not pleased at having been lectured by Phyllis and Thaddeus. Rose thinks it preposterous

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that "the Tads" should share equally with the rest of them, maddening! Phyllis was a petty tradesman's daughter, and, as Rose says, has brought Thaddeus nothing but the worst luck from the day he married her. Thaddeus returns and they keep on abusing Phyllis in his presence.

There is a little commotion at the arrival of Miss Thornhill. She is a graceful, brilliant-looking girl with perfectly refined manners, wearing an elegant travelling dress. The attitude of the James and Stephen Mortimores, and of the Pontings, undergoes a change. Miss Thornhill explains to Mr. Elkin that she did not receive his letter in time to reach her father while he was still alive. She saw him last in April. They were together at Easter, as it was always their custom to spend their holidays together, she says, drying her eyes unobtrusively.

Helen has heard that no will can be found. She says she is no worse off than thousands of young women who are suddenly thrown upon their own resources; in fact, she is better off as a calling is open to her. She confesses that she is hurt because her father hasn't made the slightest provision for her—not for the money's sake, but because she meant so much to him she has always believed. That he would have made her secure if he had lived longer she is convinced. She tells them firmly that she will accept nothing that has not come to her directly from her father.

Stephen expresses resignation. Ponting does not wish to *force* assistance upon Miss Thornhill. Mr. Elkin and Mr. Vallance have decided that the proper course to pursue is to advertise with the object of obtaining any information respecting any will which Mr. Mortimore may have made at any time. Mr. Elkin proposes also to address a circular to every solicitor on the law list. The conference breaks up.

Phyllis returns to the room and lingers with her husband after the others have left. She learns that their share of the estate will be about forty thousand pounds. They shall have one thousand five hundred pounds a year, and after their deaths their children, Joyce and Cyril, will have incomes of seven hundred and fifty pounds apiece. Phyllis rises quickly and clings to him, burying her face on his shoulder. He says she has been through a great deal,

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sixteen years of struggle—and failure. She replies that she brought it on him.

Phyllis. You always call it nonsense; you know it's true. If you hadn't married me—if you'd married a girl of better family—you wouldn't have lost caste in the town——

Thaddeus. Hush, hush! Don't cry, Phil; don't cry, old lady.

Phyl. You'd have had the choral societies, and the high school, and the organ at All Saints; you'd have been at the top of the tree long ago. You know you would!

Thad. [*rallying her*]. And if *you* hadn't married *me*, you might have captivated a gay young officer at Claybrook and got to London eventually. Rose did it, and you might have done it. So that makes us quits. Don't cry.

She was prettier than Rose, he says, and a smarter girl altogether. Now she shall be smart again. The children will no longer swallow up everything, but they will have much more. Phyllis says they must leave Singlehampton, where they would never be able to hold up their heads if they were clothed in gold.

Thad. We—we're talking as if—as if Ned's money is already ours!

Phyl. [*withdrawing her arm—steadily*]. It will be.

Thad. Will it, do you think——?

Phyl. [*with an expressionless face*]. I prophesy—it will be.

The drawing-room of the Thaddeus Mortimores' house at Singlehampton is eloquent in its furnishings of narrow means. Thaddeus is at the piano accompanying a sentimental ballad which the Rev. George Trist, standing beside him, is singing. Phyllis, looking more haggard than when last seen, is on a settee by the fireplace, deep in thought. Helen Thornhill is making a sketch of Joyce and Cyril. Joyce is a slim, serious child of fifteen, and Cyril a handsome boy a year younger. Trist is a big, healthy-looking, curly-headed young fellow in somewhat shabby clerical clothes.

James and Stephen Mortimore come in. They are on their way to meet the solicitors, and announce that there is

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to be a meeting of the family at James's house at four o'clock, or in less than an hour, to decide on the administration of the estate for the next of kin. The advertising has been kept up for a month without result. The Pontings have taken a fine house in Berkeley Square, with stables and a motor garage, and are decorating it and furnishing it elaborately.

James, for his part, has bought land on which he is going to build the finest avenue of houses in Singlehampton. "An exceptionably noble building" in the new road is to provide adequate quarters for the *Times and Mirror*. Stephen is going to put twelve thousand pounds into the paper. Thaddeus, who has made no plans, apologizes after his brothers have gone for their bad taste in talking as they did before Helen. She says it is of no consequence, and kisses Phyllis, telling them that no one in the world could deserve good fortune more than they. She is going to London the next day to begin on her art work.

Helen and Phyllis are left alone together, and Phyllis urges her earnestly to reconsider her determination not to accept an allowance from the family, otherwise, she declares, her good fortune will never bring her a moment's happiness. But Helen is immovable.

Helen [*starting up and walking to the fireplace impetuously*]. Oh, you don't understand me—my pride. A pensioner of the Mortimore family! I! How can you suggest it? I refused their help before I was fully acquainted with these, to me, uncongenial relations of father's—I don't include Mr. Tad in that expression, of course; and now I *am* acquainted with them I would refuse it a thousand times. If I were starving I wouldn't put myself under the smallest obligation to the Mortimores.

Phyl. [*unsteadily*]. Obligation—to—the—Mortimores—obligation——! [*As if about to make some communication to* HELEN, *supporting herself by leaning upon the table on the right, her body bent forward—almost inaudibly.*] Helen—Helen——

Helen. What——?

There is a short silence, and then Phyllis drops back upon the settee by the piano.

Phyl. [*rocking herself to and fro*]. Oh—oh, dear—oh——

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Helen [*coming to her and standing over her*]. You're quite ill, Phyllis; your bad nights are taking it out of you dreadfully. You ought to have the advice of a doctor.

Phyllis pleads with Helen to accept something from her husband and herself, four hundred—three hundred—two hundred pounds a year.

Phyl. [*rising and gripping* HELEN'S *shoulders*]. You shall—you shall accept it, Helen.

Helen. Phyllis! [*Releasing herself and drawing back.*] Phyllis, you're very odd to-day. You've got this allowance idea on the brain. Look here, don't let's mention the subject again, or I—I shall be offended.

Phyllis leaves the room as Joyce and Cyril appear outside the window. Joyce comes in. She has said nothing to Helen about their money, as her mother told her not to, but finding that Helen knew her Uncle Ned and is already acquainted with the circumstances of the inheritance, tells Helen that she is to finish abroad and that Cyril is to go to one of the principal public schools which stamp a boy as a gentleman for the rest of his life.

More important information is that Cyril has commissioned Joyce to convey to Helen an offer of marriage on his behalf. In three years, Joyce says, Cyril will be seventeen, and in three more he will be twenty. That will make him a man, and even then he would be content to wait. Joyce asks Helen if she is furious. She is not at all. On the contrary, she says she is highly complimented, and that if she is still unmarried when Cyril is a man, and if he is still of the same mind, he may propose to her again.

Joyce touches bitterly on the fact that their grandfather was a grocer. Her mother has suffered agonies on account of it, and she and Cyril have had a hard time to keep their heads up always. The Singlehampton people are beasts, she exclaims passionately. They forget the shop had two windows, and one half was bottles of wine. She runs off to get her hat, as Mr. Trist is going to take Helen, Cyril, and herself to the flower show.

When Mr. Trist learns that Helen is going to London the next day he looks rather blank and stammers that he is sorry. It is time she was going away, she says, before she becomes a liar and hypocrite. She was double-faced

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enough to receive the news smilingly when her uncles informed her that they were going to arrange for the administration of her father's estate without more delay, and all the time she could have struck them, could have seen them drop dead without a pang of regret. She repeats that it isn't her father's money that she covets, but she can't bear that he should have forgotten her. She thought she could resign herself to it, but she never shall be able to.

Helen. I told Mr. Thaddeus that I've been suffering no suspense this last month. It's a falsehood: I've been suffering intense suspense. I've been watching the posts, for letters from Elkin; I've been praying, daily, hourly, that something—anything—might be found to prove that father had remembered me. And I loathe these people who step over me and stand between me and the being I loved best on earth; I loathe them! I detest the whole posse of them, except the Thaddeuses; and I wish this money may bring them, and those belonging to them, every ill that's conceivable. [*Confronting* TRIST, *her bosom heaving.*] Don't you lecture me.

Trist [*good-humoredly*]. I haven't the faintest intention of doing so.

She tells him how her uncles have discussed their affairs in her hearing, and says they are insufferable. He replies that nothing is insufferable, not even the ill-breeding of James and Stephen, and then to show her how the seeds of selfishness may germinate even in the breast of a cleric, he says that the circumstance of her having been cast adrift on the world is one that fills him with hope. There is a decided possibility of a living coming his way—and practically in London. The colloquy is interrupted by the entrance of the children, who drag them off to the flower show.

Phyllis tells Thaddeus that she is not going to the family council at James's. Her features are drawn and her lips white and set.

Phyl. [*turning*]. Tad—that girl—that girl——

Thad. Helen?

Phyl. [*coming forward a little*]. We're robbing her; we're robbing her. [*Shaking.*] We're all robbing her.

Thad. You've got another bad attack of nerves this afternoon—an extra bad one——

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Phyl. [*suddenly grasping his coat*]. Tad—I—I've broken down——

Thad. Broken down?

Phyl. I've broken down under it. I—I can't endure it.

Thad. [*soothingly*]. What—what——?

Phyl. Your brother—Edward—your brother—Edward——

Thad. Yes?

Phyl. Everything—everything—belongs to her—Helen——

Thad. My dear, the family were prepared to offer Helen——

Phyl. No, no! He left every penny to her—left it to her. [*Staring into his face.*] There was a will.

Thad. A will?

Phyl. I saw it.

Thad. You saw it?

Phyl. I read it—I had it in my hand——

Thad. [*incredulously*]. *You* did!

Phyl. Yes, I—I did away with it——

Thad. Did away with it?

Phyl. Destroyed it.

Thad. A will—Ned's will——

She turns from him and sinks helplessly on to the settee by the fireplace. He stands looking down upon her in a half-frightened, half-puzzled way; then his face clears and he looks at the clock again. He asks her to let him send for the doctor. He thinks she is not right in her head and tells her she is talking nonsense, but he pauses at the door and asks her when she saw the will. She says it was on that Wednesday evening before Edward died. She took the place of the night nurse and was alone with him.

In broken, disjointed phrases she relates how Edward sent her downstairs to the library with a bunch of keys to fetch from the safe a piece of jewelry that he wanted to give her. He recollected seeing her when she was a child, skating on the ponds at Claybrook. He was sure she was a good wife and mother. He told her how to unlock the safe. She went down, opened the safe, and there she found it.

At that time she left the will where it was and went back to the sick man. She found him altered: his cheeks were

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shrunken, his jaw had dropped slightly, and his lips were quite blue. His breathing was short and quick. She gave him some medicine that was ready for such an emergency and sent the woman from the kitchen for the doctor. Then she stood watching him and the idea came to her. Suddenly her head was very clear; an argument in the train between James and the others as they were going to Linchpool came back to her: they expected Ned would leave a will, but if a man did not leave one his money went to his next of kin.

Phyl. [*rising painfully*]. After a time I—I went downstairs again. At first I persuaded myself that I only wanted to replace the jewelry—that I didn't want to have to explain about the jewelry to Ann and Lou—[*moving about the room on the left*]—but when I got downstairs I *knew* what I was going to do. And I did it as if it was the most ordinary thing in the world. I put back the little boxes—and took out the big envelope—and locked up the safe again, and—read the will.]*Pausing at the piano.*] Everything—everything—to some person—some woman living in Paris. [*Leaning upon the piano, a clenched hand against her brow.*] "Everything I die possessed of to Helen Thornhill, now or late of——" such-and-such an address, "spinster, absolutely"; and she was to be his executrix—"sole executrix." That was all, except that he begged her to reward his old servants—his old servants at his house and at the brewery. Just a few lines—on one side of a sheet of paper——

The will was in Ned's own writing. She is sure of that. He suggests that perhaps she didn't actually destroy it, imploring her to say so.

Thad. [*leaning back in his chair, dazed*]. I—I'm afraid—it—it's rather—a serious matter—to—to destroy——

Phyl. [*starting up*]. I did destroy it; I did destroy it. [*Pacing the room on the right.*] I kept it—I'd have burnt it then and there if there'd been a fire—but I kept it—I grew terrified at what I'd done—oh, I kept it till you left me at Roper's on the Thursday morning; and then I—I went on to the Ford Street bridge—and tore it into pieces—and threw them into the water. [*Wringing her hands.*] Oh! Oh!

Thad. [*his chin on his breast*]. Well—well—we've got

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A. E. ANSON AS "THADDEUS" AND THAIS LAWTON AS PHYLLIS

Thad. Don't, dear, don't! Phyllis, perhaps you—didn't—destroy the will; not—actually—destroy it? [*Imploringly.*] You didn't destroy it, dear!

Phyl. I did—I did——

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to go through with it. We've got—to go—through—— [*Rising and walking about unsteadily on the left.*] Yes, yes, yes; what a difference it'll make to everybody—not only to Helen! What a difference it'll make at "Ivanhoe," and at the Crescent—and to Rose——

It will make a great difference to them, too—to the children, he says, but they'll still carry out their intention of leaving town.

Phyl. [*wildly*]. Leaving the town! Oh, my God, we shall *have* to leave the town!

Thad. [*recoiling*]. Oh——

Phyl. Leave it as beggars and outcasts!

A maid comes in and says that a message has come that they are waiting for Mr. Thaddeus. As soon as the maid has gone out again he takes Phyllis in his arms and kisses her, puts on his hat, finds his way to the door with uncertain steps and disappears.

The tardiness of Thaddeus is a great annoyance to the other members of the family, who are gathered in the dining-room of James's house. They say that it is infamous, abominable, that the man is a blackguard and his wife a most unpleasant woman. After a while they send a message to Thaddeus that the meeting is at four o'clock, not half-past. While they are waiting James reads aloud an item in the *Courier*, the local rival to Stephen's paper, which says:

"A curious complication arises in connection with the estate of the late Mr. Edward Mortimore of Linchpool. As many of our readers are aware, the whole of that gentleman's wealth passes, in consequence of his having died intestate, to a well-known Singlehampton family, two members of which have been for many years prominently associated with the temperance movement in this town. When it is remembered that the late Mr. Mortimore's fortune was derived from brewing and the sale of *beer*——

Stephen, who is looking over James's shoulder, exclaims that the word "beer" is in italics.

"—it will be understood that our two distinguished fellow-townsmen are placed in an extremely difficult position. We have no doubt, however, that, as conscientious men, they will prove fully equal to the occasion by either re-

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nouncing their share of their late brother's property or dedicating it entirely to the advancement of the cause they have at heart."

It is the advice of Mr. Vallance that the paragraph be treated as a mere bit of chaff, but Stephen declares that it renders their position in the league absolutely untenable. Mr. Elkin says that of course the *Courier* has had its little joke, but they have got the money. If the situation becomes too acute, Stephen returns, painful as it would be to him, he will resign from the temperance league.

James. Leave 'em to swill themselves with their lemonade and boiled tea——

Stephen. And to find out how they get on without us.

James. Serve 'em up in their own juice!

At last, out of all patience, they proceed to business. Mr. Elkin states that the advertisements and circulars have evoked no answers. In fact, they have taken every possible step to find a will without success.

Mr. Elkin. The only other observation I wish to make is that several gentlemen employed in the office of the brewery in Linchpool have at different times witnessed the late Mr. Mortimore's signature to documents which have apparently required the attestation of two witnesses.

Ponting [*curtly*]. That amounts to nothing.

It appears that it is not always necessary for a man signing his will to inform the witnesses what the document is. The brothers exclaim that there is no need to go into all this, and Mr. Elkin proceeds to say that he estimates the value of the estate, which consists entirely of personal property, at one hundred ninety-two thousand pounds. After all debts, death duties, and expenses are met there will be about one hundred seventy thousand pounds to divide. Some of the family who have risen in their eagerness resume their seats. James and Ponting begin to make calculations on paper. Rose, closing her eyes, fans herself happily, and the two ladies at the tea-table resume their preparations with beaming countenances.

The door opens quietly and Thaddeus appears. He is very pale, but is outwardly calm. After a look in the direction of the table he closes the door. Mr. Vallance advises the family that any one or more of them may apply for letters of administration. James motions to Thaddeus

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imperatively to take a chair beside him, and informs him that there are one hundred seventy thousand pounds to divide. Ponting, who has finished his sum, says that it amounts to forty-two thousand pounds apiece. Mr. Vallance is continuing when Thaddeus touches his arm and says that the family must not go on with this matter, that there was a will.

There is a moment of stupefaction. Then the brothers break out with rough exclamations. Mr. Elkin gets the floor and pins Thaddeus down to the point.

Elkin [*to* STEPHEN]. Please—— [*To* THADDEUS.] Yes, sir? [THADDEUS *is silent.*] *What* about a will? [THADDEUS *is still silent.*] Eh?

Thad. I—I saw it.

Elkin. Saw a will?

Thad. I—I opened it—I—I read it——

Elkin. Read it?

Thad. I—tore it up—got rid of it.

Again there is silence, the Mortimores and the Pontings sitting open-mouthed and motionless.

Elkin [*after a while*]. Mr. Vallance, I think we ought to tell Mr. Mortimore that he appears to be making a confession of the gravest kind——

Vallance. Yes.

Elkin. One that puts him in a very serious position.

Val. [*to* THADDEUS, *after a further pause*]. Mr. Mortimore——

Thaddeus makes no response.

Elkin. If, understanding that, he chooses to continue, there is nothing to prevent our hearing him.

Thad. [*looking straight before him, his arms still upon the table, locking and unlocking his hands as he speaks*]. It—it happened on the Wednesday night—in Cannon Row—in Ned's house—the night before he died—the night we were left without a nurse. [*Another pause.* VALLANCE *takes a sheet of paper and selects a pen.* ELKIN *pushes the inkstand nearer to him.*] Mrs. James—and—and Mrs. Stephen—my—my sisters-in-law——

Ann and Louisa get to their feet and advance a step or two.

Elkin [*hearing the rustle of their skirts and turning to them*]. Keep your seats, ladies, please.

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They sit again, drawing their chairs close together.

Thad. My sisters-in-law had gone home—that is, to their hotel—to get a few hours' sleep in case of their having to sit up through the night. Jim and Stephen and I were out and about, trying to find a night nurse who'd take Nurse Ralston's place temporarily. At about nine o'clock I looked in at Cannon Row, to see how things were getting on.

The lawyers write and Thaddeus continues. He went upstairs and sat by Ned's bed. Ned told him of having taken a fancy to Phyllis, his wife, and wanting to give her a memento, and sent him down to the safe to get a piece of jewelry for her. There he saw the will.

Thaddeus takes another gulp of water. Then he finishes his story. He tells them that the will left everything to Miss Thornhill. It was dated three years ago, but he cannot remember whether the signature was witnessed. At first, also, he says that he cannot remember where he destroyed the will, but then he tells them that he tore it up on the bridge and dropped the pieces into the Linch. Mr. Vallance asks if he has anything to add.

Thad. [*in a muffled voice*]. No. [*Quickly.*] Oh, there is one thing I should like to add. [*Brokenly.*] With regard to Miss Thornhill—I—I hope you'll bear in mind that I—that none of us—heard from Mr. Elkin of the existence of a child—a daughter—till the Thursday—middle-day——

Elkin. That is so.

Thad. It doesn't make it much better; only—a girl—alone in the world—one wouldn't—[*breaking off*]—no, I've nothing more to say.

Elkin [*to* THADDEUS]. And we may take it that your present act, Mr. Mortimore, is an act of conscience, purely?

Thaddeus inclines his head. There is silence again. The Mortimores and Pontings present a picture of utter wretchedness. The ladies' tears begin to flow. James commands his voice with some difficulty. He wants to know who the money belongs to. Stephen says it belongs to Miss Thornhill. Ponting tells him not to be a "damn fool." Mr. Vallance is hardly prepared to express an opinion off-hand, but Mr. Elkin says that he will advise

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Miss Thornhill to apply to the court for the probate of the substance of the will, presuming that it was made in due form.

At this Stephen and Ponting fall back in their seats in a stupor, and once more there is silence, broken only by the sound of the women snivelling. Elkin and Vallance slowly proceed to collect their papers. James demands to know if Thaddeus has told his wife what he has been up to. Thaddeus replies that he has, and that she is terribly cut up.

Rose [*hysterically*]. The jewelry! Ha, ha, ha! [*Rising.*] She's managed to get hold of some of the jewelry, at any rate.

Ann [*with a sob*]. Yes, she—she managed *that!*

Louisa [*mopping her face*]. She's kept that from us artfully enough.

Rose [*going over to* ANN *and* LOUISA, *who rise to receive her*]. Ha, ha! Edward's "little bits" of jewelry!

Ann. Little bits!

Rose. They're little bits that are *left.*

Louisa. How many did she have of them, I wonder!

Rose. She shall be made to restore them——

Louisa. Every one of them.

Thad. No, no, no—— [*Stretching out a hand toward the ladies.*] Rosie—Ann—Lou—Phyllis hadn't any of the jewelry—not a scrap. I put it all back into the safe. I—I swear she hadn't any of it.

Val. [*to* THADDEUS]. You said your wife sent you at once.

Thad. Told me to go at once. There—there was the jewelry to put back into the safe——

Val. [*eying* THADDEUS]. What time was it when you *got* to the doctor's?

Thad. Oh—ten, I should say—or a quarter past.

James [*shaking his head*]. No. I sat there, waiting for Doctor Oswald to come in——

Stephen [*to* THADDEUS]. Besides, that couldn't have been; you were with me then.

Stephen says that Thaddeus and he were at the nurses' home from half-past nine till ten. Even Ponting revives as Thaddeus's story crumbles. Little by little the various members of the family piece together overwhelming evi-

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dence that Thaddeus was not in Ned's house long enough to have done what he claims. He can bear the cross-questioning no longer and starts up from the table, saying that it isn't fair to badger him so. What is the use of trying to confuse him, he asks; the will is the main point. Anyone would think from the way he is being treated that he has something to gain by acting the way he is.

Mr. Elkin agrees that there is no reason for doubting his good faith. In order to clear up apparent inconsistencies he suggests calling on Thaddeus's wife for help.

Thad. [*stretching out a quivering hand to them all*]. No. No, no. Don't you—don't you drag my wife into this. I—I won't have my wife dragged into this——

James [*in a blaze*]. Why not?

Stephen. Why not?

The Ladies [*indignantly*]. Ah——

Thad. You—you leave my wife out of it——

James [*to* THADDEUS, *furiously*]. Who the hell's your wife——

Elkin. Why did you do that?

Thad. [*agitatedly*]. Why, you see, Mr. Elkin, when I carried it upstairs, I found my brother Edward in a state of collapse—a sort of faint——

Elkin [*with a nod*]. Ah——

Thad. And Phyllis—my wife—she sent me off at once for the doctor. It was on the Wednesday evening, you know——

Val. [*pricking up his ears*]. Your wife, Mr. Mortimore——

Thad. It was on the Wednesday evening that the change set in.

Val. [*to* THADDEUS]. Your wife sent you off at once——

Thad. [*to* VALLANCE]. To fetch the doctor.

Val. [*raising his eyebrows*]. Oh, Mrs. Mortimore was in the house while all this was going on?

Thad. Y-yes; she was left in charge of him—in charge of Ned——

Elkin [*to* VALLANCE, *in explanation*]. To allow these other ladies to rest, preparatory to their taking charge later.

Thad. Yes.

Val. I hadn't gathered——

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James [*who had been sitting glaring into space, thoughtfully*]. Hold hard. [*To* THADDEUS.] *You* didn't go for the doctor.

Thad. Yes, I—I went——

Stephen [*awakening from his trance*]. Phyllis sent the cook for the doctor.

Thad. Yes, yes, you're quite right. The cook was the first to go——

Elkin [*to* THADDEUS]. You followed?

Thad. I followed.

James [*knitting his brows*]. It must have been a good time afterward.

Thad. Y-yes, perhaps it was.

James. I was at Dr. Oswald's when the woman arrived. The doctor was out, and——

Louisa, Ann, and Rose chime in with contemptuous exclamations. James and Stephen utter derisive shouts. Thaddeus repeats that he does object to their dragging in his wife. He is rather unsteady. His show of courage is flickering away and he seeks to go. James suddenly demands to know when his conscience began to prick him. They thought he had been gay enough right along. Louisa remarks that it is Phyllis who has been ill all the month. They all pitch into Phyllis. Thaddeus rises and speaks in a strange voice, his hands fumbling at the buttons of his jacket.

Thad. Well, gentlemen—whatever my sins are—I—I decline to sit still and hear my wife insulted in this style. If it's all the same to you, I'll call round on Mr. Vallance in the morning and—and sign the paper——

There is some further discussion, and in spite of Thaddeus's denials the truth becomes evident to all that the story he has told them, substituting himself for the principal person, is the story that his wife told him.

James [*standing over* THADDEUS]. Well! Are you proud of her now?

Stephen. *This* is what his marriage has ended in!

Louisa. I'm not in the least surprised.

Ann. Old Burdock's daughter!

Rose [*from the other side of the table*]. Thank heaven my name isn't Mortimore!

Thad. [*leaping to his feet in a frenzy*]. Don't you touch

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her! Don't any of you touch her! Don't you harm a hair of her head! [*To the group on the left.*] You've helped to bring this on her! You've helped to make her life unendurable! You've helped to bring her to this! She's been a good wife to me. Oh, my God, let me get her away! [*Turning toward the door.*] Mr. Elkin—Mr. Vallance—do let me get her away! Don't you harm a hair of her head! Don't you touch her! [*At the door.*] She's been a good wife to me! [*Opening the door and disappearing.*] She's been a good wife to me——

Ann calls Phyllis a vile woman. Ponting curses her. He swears that he wishes he had never seen or heard of the Mortimore family. James and Stephen flare up. They are apparently about to come to blows when they discover that the two lawyers have left, stolen a march on them, and gone to get a statement from Phyllis. Ponting suspects a conspiracy behind all this, with Miss Thornhill at the bottom of it. They hurry after the solicitors.

Phyllis, in deep abasement and seized with paroxysms of weeping, has signed a written confession, and Mr. Vallance reads it in the drawing-room of her home to the family. Thaddeus says that he thinks he must have been mad to suppose that he could succeed in imposing on the others. Mr. Elkin and Mr. Vallance kindly accept his excuse. He looks at his brothers and sisters wistfully, but they are staring at the carpet and make no response. He resumes his seat by Phyllis and takes her hand.

Phyllis is unable to swear that the will was duly witnessed, a fact that Ponting regards as an insuperable obstacle to the probate of its substance. He and Stephen and their wives perk up. Mr. Vallance is inclined to agree with them. At the same time, Mr. Vallance says, the facts do not warrant the making of an affidavit that Mr. Mortimore died intestate. The question whether the will was duly executed is one for the court to decide.

In response to a question raised by Helen, Mr. Elkin says that Mrs. Thaddeus Mortimore's act must be disclosed in open court. Helen asks if the offence that has been committed is a felony. Mr. Elkin inclines his head. Again there is silence. Then James asks what the penalty is. Mr. Elkin thinks there is no need of going into that

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just then, but upon being pressed says that imprisonment with or without hard labor may be imposed, but in this instance, he is sure, they would be justified in hoping for a considerable amount of leniency.

Helen. Oh, but this is impossible.

Elkin. Impossible?

Helen. Quite impossible. I couldn't be a party—to any steps which would bring ruin on Mrs. Mortimore.

Elkin [*politely*]. You refuse——

Helen. Absolutely. At any cost—at any cost to me—we must all unite in sparing her and her husband and her children.

Mr. Elkin points out that there will be a deadlock, though they all know that her father's will was found in the safe.

Helen [*looking up at him, gripping the arms of her chair*]. Yes, of course I know it. Thank God I know it! I'm happy in knowing it. I know he didn't forget me; I know I was all to him that I imagined myself to be. And it's because I've come to know this at last—through *her*—that I can afford to be a little generous to her. Oh, please don't think that I want to introduce sentimentality into this affair—[*with a contemptuous glance at* PONTING *and* STEPHEN]—any more than Colonel Ponting does—or Mr. Stephen Mortimore. Mrs. Thaddeus did a cruel thing when she destroyed that will. It's no excuse for her to say that she wasn't aware of my existence. She was defrauding *some* woman, and, as it happened—I own it now!—defrauding that woman not only of money, but of what is more valuable than money—of peace of mind, contentment, belief in one who could never speak, never explain, never defend himself. However, she has made the best reparation it is in her power to make—and she has gone through a bad time—and I forgive her. [PHYLLIS *releases herself from* THADDEUS *and drops down upon the settee. He sits upon the ottoman, burying his face in his hands.* HELEN *rises, struggling to keep back her tears, and turns to the door.*] I—I'll go upstairs—if you'll allow me——

Mr. Elkin explains that she is putting him in a position of great difficulty, but she says James Mortimore and the others may administer the estate as they intended to. This will require James to take a false oath, but she thinks that

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will be more acceptable to the Almighty than sending a poor lady to prison. Then, he asks, what would be the disposition of the estate, the whole of which morally belongs to her. Helen permits James to speak.

Ponting and Stephen protest as James begins by saying there is no doubt that the money rightfully belongs to Miss Thornhill, but he goes on to explain that he and his brothers are poor, their business is being cut into, they've never had any capital, and they have had to educate their children. They have practically nothing to end their days on. Helen then says that they will share the estate together, but it is to be divided into six parts, one of which is to go to the hospital. Ponting and Stephen regard it as entirely unnecessary to do anything for the hospital, but James silences them and they begin to figure. They make the shares twenty-eight thousand pounds apiece. Thaddeus intervenes.

Thad. [*agitatedly*]. I don't take my share—my wife and I don't take our share—we don't touch it——

Phyl. [*clinging to* THADDEUS]. We won't touch it—oh, no, no, no, no, no, no——

James [*to* THADDEUS]. Don't be a fool—don't be a fool!

Thad. Fool or no fool—not a penny————

Ponting's pencil again is active, and he announces that there is thirty-four thousand apiece exactly. Helen, however, stipulates that Thaddeus's share shall be settled on his children. Phyllis, leaving Thaddeus, totters forward, and drops on her knees before Helen, bowing her head in Helen's lap and weeping. Helen disengages herself from Phyllis, rises, and walks away to the fireplace. Thaddeus lifts Phyllis from the ground and leads her to the open window. They stand there, facing the garden, she crying upon his shoulder.

Mr. Elkin and Mr. Vallance now beg to be allowed to withdraw from the affair altogether. Mr. Elkin offers a last bit of advice that they avoid putting the terms of the compromise in writing. In the event of any breach of faith, he says, there would be nothing to prevent Helen propounding the will. When the conference has broken up Helen asks James to try to make things a little easier for Thaddeus and his wife. She says he can influence the

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others if he will. His reply is to speak kindly to Phyllis upon leaving.

At last Helen is alone with Thaddeus and Phyllis, who move toward the door, Phyllis saying that she will keep out of the way until Helen is gone. Helen calls after them that she will go that evening, and that if she doesn't see Mr. Trist again to tell him that she has yielded to the desire of the family that she should accept a share of her father's property. A second time she calls Thaddeus back.

Helen. Oh, Mr. Tad—— [*He halts.*] Mr. Tad, I propose that we allow six months to pass in complete silence—six months from to-day——

Thad. [*dully, not understanding*]. Six months—silence——

Helen. I mean without my hearing from your wife. Then, perhaps, she—she will send me another invitation——

Thad. [*leaving the door, staring at her*]. Invitation——

Helen. By that time we shall, all of us, have forgotten a great deal—shan't we? [*Facing him.*] You'll say that to her for me?

He hesitates, then he takes her hands and, bending over them, kisses them repeatedly.

Thad. [*stopping halfway and pulling himself together*]. Miss Thornhill—my wife—my wife—you've seen her at a disadvantage—a terrible disadvantage. Few—few pass through life without being seen—once—or oftener—at a disadvantage. She—she's a splendid woman—a splendid woman—a splendid wife and mother. [*Moving to the door.*] They haven't appreciated her—the family haven't appreciated her. They've treated her abominably; for sixteen years she's been treated abominably. [*At the door.*] But I've never regretted my marriage. [*Defiantly.*] I've never regretted it—never, for a single moment—never regretted it—never—never regretted it——

He disappears. She goes to the table and takes up her drawing block and box of crayons. As she does so, Trist lets himself into the garden. Seeing him she pauses, and presently he enters the room at the open window. She tells him that she has come into a small fortune, that they have persuaded her to take a share of her father's money.

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Trist. I—I'm glad.

Helen. You—you think I'm doing rightly?

Trist [*depressed*]. Why—of course.

She opens the door and he goes to the window.

Helen. Mr Trist—— [*She comes back into the room.*] Mr. Trist—— [*He approaches her.*] Mr. Trist—don't—don't——

Trist. What?

Helen [*her head drooping*]. Don't let this make any difference between us—will you?

She raises her eyes to his and they stand looking at each other in silence. Then she turns away abruptly and leaves the room as he hurries through the garden.

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THE MASTERPIECES OF MODERN DRAMA

PART II

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The Masterpieces of Modern Drama

JUSTICE*

By John Galsworthy

First played in London at the Duke of York's Theatre on February 21, 1910.

Argument: William Falder, a young clerk in a solicitor's office, momentarily unbalanced by emotional stress, has committed forgery in order to rescue a woman he loves from cruel treatment by her husband. His misdeed is detected as he is about to sail with the woman for South America. It remains to be seen how "Justice" will mould his destiny.

The scene is the managing clerk's room at the offices of James and Walter How on a July morning. The managing clerk, Cokeson, is sitting at his table adding up figures in a pass-book and murmuring their numbers to himself. He is a man of sixty, wearing spectacles, rather short, with a bald head, and an honest pug-dog face. Sweedle, the office boy, a pale youth of sixteen, with spiky hair, announces that "a party" is there to see Mr. Falder. Cokeson tells the boy to ask her in.

Ruth Honeywill is a tall woman, twenty-six years old, unpretentiously dressed, with black hair and eyes, and an ivory-white, clear-cut face. She stands very still, having a natural dignity of pose and gesture. Cokeson says the young man for whom she asked is out, and tells her to state her business. It is a personal matter. He protests against her bringing it then. She says it is a matter of life and death.

* Published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

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Falder now comes in. He is a pale, good-looking young man, with quick, rather scared eyes. Cokeson says he will give her a minute, and leaves them. Mrs. Honeywill tells Falder that her husband is on the drink again and has tried to cut her throat. She came out in the morning, with the children, before he was awake. Falder replies that he has bought tickets and will meet her at a steamboat office at 11.45.

Falder. For God's sake don't forget we're man and wife! [*Looking at her with tragic intensity.*] Ruth!

Ruth. You're not afraid of going, are you?

Fal. Have you got your things, and the children's?

Ruth. Had to leave them for fear of waking Honeywill, all but one bag. I can't go near home again.

Fal. [*wincing*]. All that money gone for nothing. How much *must* you have?

Ruth. Six pounds—I could do with that, I think.

Fal. Don't give away where we're going. [*As if to himself.*] When I get out there I mean to forget it all.

Ruth. If you're sorry, say so. I'd sooner he killed me than take you against your will.

Fal. [*with a queer smile*]. We've got to go. I don't care; I'll have *you*.

Ruth. You've just to say; it's not too late.

Fal. It *is* too late. Here's seven pounds. Booking office—11.45 to-night. If you weren't what you are to me, Ruth——

Ruth. Kiss me!

They cling together passionately, then fly apart just as Cokeson reënters the room. Ruth turns and goes out.

Cokeson speaks very reprovingly to Falder for making an improper use of the premises, and gives him a tract on "Purity in the Home." Falder goes into the junior clerk's room. Walter How comes in. He is a rather refined looking man of thirty-five, with a pleasant, almost apologetic voice. He has been in to see some pictures at the Guildhall on his way to the office. The head clerk directs his attention to business. It appears that Walter has some compunctions against proceeding in a case which Cokeson mentions, although the law is on their side.

The elder How, Mr. James, a shortish man with white side-whiskers, plentiful gray hair, shrewd eyes, and a gold

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pince-nez, comes in from the partners' room with the papers in the very case they are discussing. They must go forward there, he says. He then speaks of the firm's balance, which falls below what he supposed it was. They check up the recent drafts. A check for ninety pounds challenges attention. Walter is sure it was nine that he drew a check for in that matter. There is no record of the check for nine pounds. Davis took it to the bank, however, and got gold for it.

Davis has sailed for Australia. It looks black for him. They send for the cashier from the bank, and ring up police headquarters for a detective. The office boy tells Cokeson quietly that "that woman" has popped up again to see Mr. Falder. Cokeson says to have her wait outside. Falder will be going out to his lunch soon.

When the cashier comes he sees Falder and at once recognizes him as the man who cashed the check. Falder looks at the cashier with fright, and then returns to his room, but a moment later, hat in hand, reappears and starts to pass through the outer office. Halted, he says he was going to lunch. James suddenly shows him the check and asks him if he recognizes it. Falder replies that he does not. James then says that he cashed it. Falder remembers cashing it for Davis and giving Davis the money. He denies that it was he who changed the amount from nine to ninety pounds. He cannot explain, however, how the amount was changed in the counterfoil after Davis had sailed. Then he breaks down.

Fal. I wanted the money so badly, sir, I didn't know what I was doing.

Cokeson. However such a thing could have come into your head!

Fal. [*grasping at the words*]. I can't think, sir, really! It was just a minute of madness.

James. A long minute, Falder. [*Tapping the counterfoil.*] Four days at least.

Fal. Sir, I swear I didn't know what I'd done till afterwards, and then I hadn't the pluck. Oh, sir, look over it! I'll pay the money back—I will, I promise.

James tells him to go into his room. The case is about as bad as it could be, he says to his son and the head clerk. There's nothing for it but to prosecute. He doubts if it

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was the first offence. It was too neat a peace of swindling for him to believe that.

Coke. I shouldn't be surprised if he was tempted.

James. Life is one long temptation, Cokeson.

Coke. Ye–es, but I'm speaking of the flesh and the devil, Mr. James. There was a woman come to see him this morning.

Walter. The woman we passed as we came in just now. Is it his wife?

Coke. No, no relation. [*Restraining what in jollier circumstances would have been a wink.*] A married person, though.

Wal. How do you know?

Coke. Brought her children. [*Scandalized.*] They were in the outside office.

James. A real bad egg.

Walter wants to give him a chance. James can't forgive the sneaky way he went to work, as he calls it, counting on their suspecting young Davis if the matter came to light; he's rotten; no doing anything with such fellows except to keep 'em out of harm's way; they've got a blind spot. It is out of the question keeping him there or passing him on to somebody else. Walter and Cokeson both oppose prosecution and plead for the young man, but James is firm. Walter's last word is that they will regret it.

The detective comes and makes the arrest, James charging Falder with felony.

Fal. Oh, sir! There's some one—I did it for her. Let me be till to-morrow.

James motions with his hand. At that sign of hardness, Falder becomes rigid. Then, turning, he goes out quietly in the detective's grip. James follows, stiff and erect. When they have disappeared Cokeson spins completely around and makes a rush for the outer office.

Coke. [*hoarsely*]. Here! Here! What are we doing?

There is silence. He takes out his handkerchief and mops the sweat from his face. Going back blindly to his table he sits down, and stares blankly at his lunch.

On a foggy October afternoon Falder is brought before a Court of Justice. The counsel for the crown is Harold

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Cleaver, a dried, yellowish man, of more than middle age, in a wig worn almost to the color of his face. Hector Frome, the counsel for the defence, is a young, tall man, clean-shaved, in a very white wig. James How and his son have given their testimony, and Mr. Cleaver has just put in the case for the crown.

Rising and bowing to the judge, Mr. Frome says that he is not going to dispute the fact that the prisoner altered the check, but that he did so in a moment of aberration amounting to insanity. He will call a woman who will tell the events that led up to this act, the tragic circumstances of her life, and the still more tragic infatuation with which she inspired the prisoner. This woman goes in actual terror of her life from her husband, he says, and the law gives her no power to get rid of him.

The judge asks if what Mr. Frome is saying is relevant. He submits that it is extremely. He goes on to say that a separation order would have given this woman very insufficient protection. She set her whole hopes on the prisoner, and they turned toward life in a new country where they might pass as man and wife. The first witness he calls is Mr. Cokeson, who is somewhat hampered in expressing himself by the limitations of his vocabulary.

That Falder, on July 7th, the day on which the forgery was committed, was "jumpy" and had a "funny" look in his eyes, is the substance of the head clerk's testimony. On the day when the forgery was discovered, he says, the woman came to the office to see the prisoner and stated that it was on a matter of life and death. On cross-examination Cokeson is unable to give a more definite idea of his meaning in saying that Falder's eyes looked "funny."

Mrs. Honeywill testifies that she has not been living with her husband since July; she and Falder were in love with each other, but as yet their relationship had been only that of friends; her husband ill-treated her in all sorts of ways, and Falder offered to take her out of it. She remembers the morning of July 7th, she says, because her husband had nearly strangled her. She just managed to get away from him and went straight to her friend, who was very much upset, and the next day gave her money to buy an outfit for herself and the children, although he had nearly wept the day before because he had no money to give her. In

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her opinion, her danger and unhappiness was likely to affect Falder's mental balance and reason.

Falder is called to the stand. He describes Ruth's visit to him on the morning of July 7th. Her dress was torn, she was gasping for breath, her throat bore the marks of her husband's fingers, and the eyes were very bloodshot. He was frightened, and when she told him what had happened it was too much for him. He was out of his senses for fear it would happen again. When the other clerk gave him the check it flashed across his mind that if he put a ty on the nine and a nought after the figure there would be the money to get away. He didn't think of it again, he says, and really doesn't remember anything he did until he presented the check for payment.

Cleaver. Divested of the romantic glamor which my friend is casting over the case, is this anything but an ordinary forgery? Come.

Fal. I was half frantic all that morning, sir.

Cleav. Now, now! You don't deny that the ty and the nought were so like the rest of the handwriting as to thoroughly deceive the cashier?

Fal. It was an accident.

Cleav. [*cheerfully*]. Queer sort of accident, wasn't it? On which day did you alter the counterfoil?

Fal. [*hanging his head*]. On the Wednesday morning.

Cleav. Was that an accident, too?

Fal. [*faintly*]. No.

Cleav. To do that you had to watch your opportunity, I suppose?

Fal. [*almost inaudibly*]. Yes.

Cleav. You don't suggest that you were suffering under great excitement when you did that?

Fal. I was haunted.

Cleav. With the fear of being found out?

Fal. [*very low*]. Yes.

The Judge. Didn't it occur to you that the only thing for you to do was to confess to your employers, and restore the money?

Fal. I was afraid.

[*There is silence.*]

Cleav. You desired, too, no doubt, to complete your design of taking this woman away?

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Fal. When I found I'd done a thing like that, to do it for nothing seemed so dreadful. I might just as well have chucked myself into the river.

Falder says that he did not think until after his act of the possibility of suspicion falling on the other clerk. He meant to write when he got to South America and to repay the money. Cleaver asks if any aberration of this nature ever attacked him before. The answer is in the negative. Asked if he still persists in saying that he doesn't remember altering the check, he replies that if he hadn't been mad he shouldn't have had the courage. He did not eat all day, and that night he did not sleep. After Davis left the check with him it was only four minutes before he was at the bank and the cashier was asking if he would have gold or notes. Then he seemed to come to himself, but it was too late.

Frome [*gathering up his notes*]. If it please your lordship—gentlemen of the jury—my friend in cross-examination has shown a disposition to sneer at the defence which has been set up in this case, and I am free to admit that nothing I can say will move you, if the evidence has not already convinced you, that the prisoner committed this act in a moment when to all practical intents and purposes he was not responsible for his actions; a moment of such mental and moral vacuity, arising from the violent emotional agitation under which he had been suffering, as to amount to temporary madness. My friend has alluded to the "romantic glamour" with which I have sought to invest this case. Gentlemen, I have done nothing of the kind. I have merely shown you the background of "life"—that palpitating life which, believe me—whatever my friend may say—always lies behind the commission of a crime.

That they live in a civilized age, and that the sight of brutal violence disturbs them in a very strange way, Mr. Frome reminds the jury. He asks them to think what their feelings would be if they saw brutal violence inflicted on the woman they loved, and calls attention to the prisoner's age and temperament.

Frome. I don't pretend, mind you, that his mental irresponsibility was more than a flash of darkness, in which all sense of proportion became lost; but I do contend, that,

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just as a man who destroys himself at such a moment may be, and often is, absolved from the crime of self-murder, so he may, and frequently does, commit other crimes while in this irresponsible condition, and that he may as justly be acquitted of criminal intent and treated as a patient. I admit that this is a plea that might well be abused. It is a matter for discretion. But here you have a case in which there is every reason to give the benefit of the doubt.

The jury have seen the great affection existing between the prisoner and this woman, says Mr. Frome. She has come to give evidence for him at the risk of her life. It is impossible for them to doubt his distress on the morning when he committed this act. They well know what terrible havoc such distress can make in weak and highly nervous people. His further acts, his failure to confess, the alteration of the counterfoil, his preparations for flight, are all evidence—not of deliberate and guilty intention when he committed the prime act from which these subsequent acts arose, but evidence merely of the weak character which is clearly enough his misfortune.

Frome. But is a man to be lost because he is bred and born with a weak character? Gentlemen, men like the prisoner are daily destroyed under our law for want of that human insight which sees them as they are, patients, and not criminals. If the prisoner be found guilty, and treated as though he were a criminal type, he will, as all experience shows, in all probability become one. I beg you not to return a verdict that may thrust him back into prison and brand him forever. Gentlemen, Justice is a machine that, when some one has given it the starting push, rolls on of itself. Is this young man to be ground to pieces under this machine for an act which at the worst was one of weakness? Is he to become a member of the luckless crews that man those dark, ill-starred ships called prisons? Is that to be his voyage—from which so few return? Or is he to have another chance, to be still looked on as one who has gone a little astray, but who will come back?

Mr. Frome asks the jury to weigh in the scales his criminality and the suffering he has undergone. He has lain in prison under this charge for more than two months;

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the rolling of the chariot wheels of Justice over this boy began when it was decided to prosecute him.

Mr. Cleaver points out that the facts in the case are not disputed, and he says the defence is so thin that he doesn't propose to waste the time of the court by taking the jury over the evidence. He reasons that the prisoner obviously was not mad when he received the check. He does not care to weary the jury with lengthy argument.

Cleav. My friend has adopted this way of saying a great deal to you—and very eloquently—on the score of youth, temptation, and the like. I might point out, however, that the offence with which the prisoner is charged is one of the most serious known to our law; and there are certain features in this case, such as the suspicion which he allowed to rest on his innocent fellow-clerk, and his relations with this married woman, which will render it difficult for you to attach too much importance to such pleading. I ask you, in short, gentlemen, for that verdict of guilty which, in the circumstances, I regard you as, unfortunately, bound to record.

The Judge speaks in a businesslike tone. The facts are admitted, so far as the alteration of the check and the counterfoil go, he says. If they think that what they have heard establishes the fact that the prisoner was insane at the time of the forgery, they will find him guilty, but insane. If, on the other hand, they conclude that he was sane, they will find him guilty. They must not allow any considerations of age or temptation to weigh with them. Before they can come to a verdict of guilty but insane they must be thoroughly convinced that the condition of his mind was such as would have qualified him at the moment for a lunatic asylum.

As soon as the jury have retired Falder asks his counsel to request the Judge to direct that Ruth's name must not be disclosed in press reports of the proceedings, as the consequences might be very serious to her. The Judge says that it goes very much against the grain with him that the name of a witness should ever be suppressed. He will take the application under consideration. He has to remember, he adds, that the woman may have come there to commit perjury on the prisoner's behalf. Mr. Frome starts to protest, but the Judge cuts him off, and the jury

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returns to the room. The foreman announces the verdict to be "Guilty."

Mr. Frome asks to speak for mitigation of sentence, but the Judge thinks he cannot add anything to what he has already said. The Judge turns to the prisoner and informs him that he has been found guilty, rightly in his opinion, of forgery. Throughout the trial his counsel was in reality making an appeal for mercy. And this appeal of his, which in the end amounted to a passionate appeal, he based in effect on an indictment of the march of Justice, which he practically accused of confirming and completing the process of criminality. The Judge has to consider on the one hand the grave nature of the offence, the deliberate way in which the prisoner afterward altered the counterfoil, the danger he caused to an innocent man—and finally he has to consider the necessity of deterring others from following his example.

The Judge has every wish, he says, consistently with his duty—not only to the convict, but to the community—to treat him with leniency. And that brings him to the determining factors in his consideration of the case. Falder was a clerk in a lawyer's office, and there can be no possible excuse made for him on the ground that he was not fully conversant with the nature of the crime which he was committing. Furthermore, the fact is patent that he committed the crime with the view of furthering an immoral design.

The Judge. Now, however I might wish, I am not able to justify to my conscience a plea for mercy which has a basis inimical to morality. It is vitiated *abinitio*, and would, if successful, free you for the completion of this immoral project. Your counsel has made an attempt to trace your offence back to what he seems to suggest is a defect in the marriage law; he has made an attempt also to show that to punish you with further imprisonment would be unjust. I do not follow him in these flights. The law is what it is—a majestic edifice, sheltering all of us, each stone of which rests on another. I am concerned only with its administration. The crime you have committed is a very serious one. I cannot feel it in accordance with my duty to Society to exercise the powers I have in your favor. You will go to penal servitude for three years.

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Falder, who throughout the Judge's speech has looked at him steadily, lets his head fall forward on his breast. Ruth starts up from her seat as he is taken out by the warders. There is a bustle in court.

The Judge [*speaking to the reporters*]. Gentlemen of the Press, I think that the name of the female witness should not be reported.

The reporters bow their acquiescence.

The Judge [*to* RUTH, *who is staring in the direction in which* FALDER *has disappeared*]. Do you understand, your name will not be mentioned?

Coke. [*pulling her sleeve*]. The Judge is speaking to you.

Ruth turns, stares at the Judge, and turns away.

The Judge. I shall sit rather late to-day. Call the next case.

In a plainly furnished room in a prison, with two large barred windows overlooking the prisoners' exercise yard, sits the Governor talking with the chief warder, Wooder, who has just brought in a rough saw made of a piece of metal with which one of the prisoners sawed part way through his window bar. Wooder thinks that an old convict should have known better, but says the man claims he did it to occupy his mind, that all they think of is breaking in and breaking out.

Wooder. Curious thing, sir: they seem to know when there's one of these tries at escape going on. It makes them restive—there's a regular wave going through them just now.

Governor [*meditatively*]. Odd things—those waves. [*Turning to look at the prisoners exercising.*] Seem quiet enough out here!

Wood. That Irishman, O'Cleary, began banging on his door this morning. Little thing like that's quite enough to upset the whole lot. They're just like dumb animals at these times.

Governor. I've seen it with horses before thunder—it'll run right through cavalry lines.

The chaplain comes in, and the Governor shows him the saw and asks him if he knows of anything to account for the state of the men, but the chaplain has not noticed anything. Some of them have an extraordinary perverted

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will power, he says, and there is nothing to be done until it is broken. And not much then, returns the Governor. A visitor is shown in. He is Cokeson.

Cokeson has come at the request of Falder's sister, whose husband would not allow her to come. He makes the request that Falder be allowed to run about with the other prisoners, fearing that the solitary confinement will prey on his mind, but the Governor tells him that it is only the local prisoners who are allowed to work together. The convicts serve their three months there in separate confinement. Cokeson speaks of Falder's sad story, saying that there's a party he is very much attached to. The chaplain avers that if it were not for drink and women the prison might be closed.

Cokeson wants to explain the situation. He tells them about Falder's attachment to Mrs. Honeywill, and the brutality of her husband. It was a great consolation to the young man to learn that she was living apart from her husband, and now he has had to tell him that she could not support herself and the children and was forced to go back to the man.

The Governor sends for the prison doctor, who reports that Falder's punishment is not doing him any harm, although he is nervous and melancholy. The chaplain puts in that it is just at this period that they are able to make some impression on prisoners, speaking from his special standpoint. The Governor promises to see the prisoner himself that day and learn if his health has suffered. Cokeson goes.

The Chaplain. Our friend seems to think that the prison is a hospital.

Coke. [*returning suddenly with an apologetic air*]. There's just one little thing. This woman—I suppose I mustn't ask you to let him see her. It'd be a rare treat for them both. He's thinking about her all the time. Of course she's not his wife. But he's quite safe in here. They're a pitiful couple. You couldn't make an exception?

Governor [*wearily*]. As you say, my dear sir, I couldn't make an exception; he won't be allowed another visit of any sort till he goes to a convict prison.

On the ground corridor of the prison the Warder Instructor is making the rounds of the cells. Each cell door

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has a little round peep-hole at the level of a man's eye, covered by a little round disc, which, raised upward, affords a view of the cell. The Governor comes walking down the corridor, followed by Wooder. He asks the Instructor if he has anything to report. The Instructor says that Q 3007, Falder, is behind in his work and will lose marks.

The Governor goes to the cell of the man who had the saw, Moaney, and Wooder opens the door. The prisoner springs up and stands in the middle of the cell. He is a raw-boned fellow, about fifty-six years old, with outstanding bat's ears and fierce, staring, steel-colored eyes. He explains that making the saw passed the time. What he is given to do does not occupy his mind. The Governor thinks he might find a better way.

The prisoner has to keep his hand in against the time he gets out, he says. It's no good taking up anything else at this time of life. He will be in again in a year or two, after he has done this lot, and he does not want to disgrace himself when he is out. He feels pride in his work. He won't promise not to make another attempt. The Governor says he shall have two days in "the cells" on bread and water. The prisoner, who had been expecting to get seven, thanks the Governor.

Another prisoner complains to the Governor that O'Cleary, who is in the next cell to him, disturbs him by knocking about like a wild beast in the early morning, and in the evening, too. It keeps him from sleeping. O'Cleary explains that he feels the want of a little noise, which serves the purpose of conversation. When Falder's door is opened he lurches forward.

Falder can get very little sleep. He feels as if he should never get out as long as he lives. He has tried reading, but it's no good. He can't take the words in. He keeps thinking of what is going on outside. The Governor tells him that he must not think about any bad news that he may have had. The doctor goes into the cell to talk with Falder, and the Governor and Wooder walk away. Wooder thinks that the men are upset because it is Christmas. When the doctor joins them he says that Q 3007 is all right. He would be better off in the shops, but if one case was reported a dozen others would have to be.

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The interior of Falder's cell is a whitewashed space thirteen feet broad by seven deep and nine high. In the failing light Falder, in his stockings, is seen standing motionless, with his head inclined toward the door, listening. He is trying harder and harder to hear something—any little thing that is going on outside. He springs suddenly upright—as if at a sound—and remains perfectly motionless. Then, with a heavy sigh, he moves to his work, and stands looking at it, with his head down; he does a stitch or two, having the air of a man so lost in sadness that each stitch is, as it were, a coming to life. Then, turning abruptly, he begins pacing the cell, moving his head like an animal pacing its cage.

He stops again at the door, listens, and, placing the palms of his hands against it with the fingers spread out, leans his forehead against the iron. Turning from it, presently, he moves slowly back toward the window. It has grown nearly dark. Suddenly he seems to be seeing somebody or something. There is a sharp tap and click; the cell light has been turned up. The cell is brightly lighted. Falder is seen gasping for breath.

A sound from far away, as of distant, dull beating on thick metal, is suddenly audible. Falder shrinks back, not able to bear this sudden clamor. But the sound grows, as though some great tumbril were rolling toward the cell. And gradually it seems to hypnotize him. He begins creeping inch by inch nearer to the door. The banging sound, travelling from cell to cell, draws closer and closer; Falder's hands are seen moving as if his spirit had already joined in this beating, and the sound swells till it seems to have entered the very cell. He suddenly raises his clenched fists. Panting violently, he flings himself at his door, and beats on it.

Two years later, at a few minutes to ten of a March morning, Sweedle is getting the office ready when Ruth Honeywill comes in. There seems a kind of exultation and excitement behind her usual impassivity. She has seen Falder, who is out of prison. It is not long before Cokeson arrives. Ruth tells him that her return to her husband did not work well. She could not stay with him, after all. She has met Falder. It was quite by chance,

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as he did not know where to find her. He was in a dreadful plight, and had been sleeping in a park.

The employment that had been obtained for Falder lasted only a short time, as his fellow employees learned about his past. To Cokeson's thinking, Ruth does not look unprosperous, and he hopes that she can do something for Falder. She replies that she might have, but that now she has seen him she has given up a source of income that she had. The fact is that when she went back to Honeywill he used her worse than ever, and she lost her health. Then, when he began knocking the children around, she could stand no more. She tried sewing, but gave it up after a long struggle and accepted a new relation with her employer rather than see her children starve.

She begs Cokeson to try to get Falder back into the office, and he promises to speak to the partners. There is a vacancy, but he does not think that Falder's chances are good. She goes out, and Falder, who has been waiting outside, enters the office. He looks older, and is thin and pale. He tells Cokeson that he seems to be struggling against a thing that is all around him. It is as if he were in a net; as fast as he cuts it here it grows up there. He has had two jobs. He left the second as he hadn't acted as he should have regarding references, and became frightened.

The partners come in, and Walter greets the former clerk very kindly. When Falder has withdrawn to another room, the elder Mr. How is rather astonished at the proposal that he should have "a jail bird" in the office. Walter thinks they owe Falder a leg up.

James. He brought it all on himself.

Wal. The doctrine of full responsibility doesn't quite hold in these days.

James [*rather grimly*]. You'll find it safer to hold it for all that, my boy.

Wal. For one's self, yes—not for other people, thanks.

James. Well, I don't want to be hard.

James asks what about this woman that Falder was mixed up with, and wants to know if she is with her husband. Falder may be living with her. The affair looks too shady altogether. He calls Falder in and tells him that he and his son want to give him another chance.

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Falder takes occasion to say that his case is like that of many prisoners whom he met. If they had been treated differently at first they would have done better. James tells him to look to the future.

James. Now, my boy, what you've got to do is to put all the past behind you and build yourself up a steady reputation. And that brings me to the second thing. This woman you were mixed up with—you must give us your word, you know, to have done with that. There's no chance of your keeping straight if you're to begin your future with such a relationship.

Fal. [*looking from one to the other with a hunted expression*]. But, sir . . . but, sir . . . it's the one thing I looked forward to all the time. And she, too . . . I couldn't find her before last night.

Cokeson is becoming more and more uneasy.

James. This is painful, Falder. But you must see for yourself that it's impossible for a firm like this to close its eyes to everything. Give us this proof of your resolve to keep straight, and you can come back—not otherwise.

Fal. [*after staring at* JAMES *suddenly stiffens himself*]. I couldn't give her up. I couldn't! Oh, sir! I'm all she's got to look to. And I'm sure she's all I've got.

James is sorry, but he must be firm. He declares that no good can come of this connection. If there were a prospect of his being able to marry the woman—it might be another thing. Falder thinks that they could get rid of Ruth's husband with a little help. Walter is inclined to give him the assistance. Falder goes to the window and looks down into the street.

Cokeson informs the partners that the course proposed is impracticable. The woman has not been quite what she ought while the young man was away. She has lost her chance. They cannot consult how to swindle the law. Ruth has been waiting outside. They call her in, and Falder comes back from the window. James says he understands that she has only just met Falder again.

James. He's told us about himself, and we're very sorry for him. I've promised to take him back here if he'll make a fresh start. [*Looking steadily at* RUTH.] This is a matter that requires courage, ma'am.

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Ruth, who is looking at Falder, begins to twist her hands in front of her as though prescient of disaster.

Fal. Mr. Walter How is good enough to say that he'll help us to get you a divorce.

Ruth flashes a startled glance at James and Walter.

James. I don't think that's practicable, Falder.

Fal. But, sir——

James [*steadily*]. Now, Mrs. Honeywill. You're fond of him?

Ruth. Yes, sir; I love him. [*She looks miserably at* FALDER.]

James. Then you don't want to stand in his way, do you?

Ruth [*in a faint voice*]. I could take care of him.

James. The best way you can take care of him will be to give him up.

Falder protests. He says she can get a divorce. Ruth assents to James's proposal in a voice just above a whisper.

James [*forcing himself to look at her*]. I put it to you, ma'am. His future is in your hands.

Ruth [*miserably*]. I want to do the best for him.

James [*a little huskily*]. That's right, that's right!

Fal. I don't understand. You're not going to give me up—after all this? There's something—— [*Starting forward to* JAMES.] Sir, I swear solemnly there's been nothing between us.

James. I believe you, Falder. Come, my lad, be as plucky as she is.

Fal. Just now you were going to help us. [*He stares at* RUTH, *who is standing absolutely still; his face and hands twitch and quiver as the truth dawns on him.*] What is it? You've not been——

Wal. Father!

James [*hurriedly*]. There, there! That'll do, that'll do! I'll give you your chance, Falder. Don't let me know what you do with yourselves, that's all.

Fal. [*as if he has not heard*]. Ruth?

Ruth looks at him; and Falder covers his face with his hands. There is silence.

Coke. [*suddenly*]. There's some one out there. [*To* RUTH.] Go in here. You'll feel better by yourself for a minute.

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He points to the clerks' room and moves toward the outer office. Falder does not move. Ruth puts out her hand timidly. He shrinks back from the touch. She turns and goes miserably into the clerks' room. With a brusque movement he follows, seizing her by the shoulder just inside the doorway. Cokeson closes the door.

James tells Cokeson to get rid of whoever is in the outside office, but at that moment Detective-Sergeant Wister enters. He asks for the clerk whom he arrested there two and a half years ago, explaining that the young man has failed to report himself for the last four weeks. The police have just heard that there is a serious matter of obtaining employment with a forged reference. What, with the two things together, they must have him.

There is silence. Walter and Cokeson steal glances at James, who is staring at the detective. Cokeson says if the detective will call again they will tell him anything they can learn, but the officer sees James glancing at a cap on the table. He goes to the door of the clerks' room. Cokeson tries to turn him aside. Just then they hear Ruth's voice pleading, and then Falder's saying that he cannot do what is asked. The detective goes in and brings out Falder. Falder goes out through the outer office, half dragging Wister after him.

There are sounds of footsteps descending the stone stairs; suddenly a dull thud, a faint "My God!" in Wister's voice. Walter looks into the clerks' room and exclaims that the woman is fainting. He and Cokeson support her from the doorway of the clerks' room. Cokeson gets some sherry which they try to force between her lips. There is the sound of feet and they stop to listen. The outer door is reopened. Wister and Sweedle are seen carrying some burden, which they lay down in the outer office. All but Ruth cluster round it. Wister says that he jumped. His neck is broken. "And what was it?" he says. "Just a few months."

On Ruth's face an expression of fear and horror have been seen growing, as if she dared not turn toward the voices. She now rises and steals toward them.

Wal. [*turning suddenly*]. Look!

The three men shrink back out of her way, one by one, into Cokeson's room. Ruth drops on her knees by the body.

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Ruth [*in a whisper*]. What is it? He's not breathing. [*She crouches over him.*] My dear! My pretty!

In the outer office doorway the figures of men are seen standing.

Ruth [*leaping to her feet*]. No, no! No, no! He's dead!

The figures of the men shrink back.

Coke. [*stealing forward. In a hoarse voice*]. There, there, poor dear woman!

At the sound behind her Ruth faces round at him.

Coke. No one'll touch him now! Never again! He's safe with gentle Jesus!

Ruth stands as though turned to stone in the doorway staring at Cokeson, who, bending humbly before her, holds out his hand as one would to a lost dog.

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DISRAELI*

By Louis N. Parker

First played in Montreal at the Princess Theatre on January 23, 1911.

Argument: Disraeli, as Prime Minister of England, is scheming to obtain control of the Suez Canal, forestalling Russia, by purchasing the shares held by the Khedive of Egypt. In order to do this he must borrow the money, undetected by the spies who are watching his every move, without waiting for Parliament to consider an appropriation, but the Governor of the Bank of England on whom he relies gives him a point-blank refusal. The struggle is on between Disraeli and the secret agents of Russia.

It is after breakfast at Glastenbury Towers. The Duke and Duchess, their two eldest daughters, Lady Cudworth and Lady Brooke, with their husbands, and Charles, Viscount Deeford, are together for the moment in the octagonal room. Lady Cudworth remarks to her husband that she must have a thousand pounds for gowns if they are to visit the Queen at Balmoral. Charles is talking of his plan to build model cottages on his estate. After all, he says, a happy peasantry is the backbone of England. The Duke thinks the happy peasantry would sell the drains for old lead, use the staircase for firewood, and keep pigs in the pantry.

Among the guests are Disraeli and his wife, Lady Beaconsfield; Sir Michael Probert, Governor of the Bank of England, and Mrs. Noel Travers. Mrs. Travers, a charming and very smart young woman, whose husband is said to be seeking his health at Carlsbad, comes in to report that Lady Beaconsfield is feeling better than on the day before. The Duchess of Glastenbury, it appears, has no very high

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opinion of Disraeli, thinking he achieved his eminent position by wearing satin waistcoats and marrying an old woman for her money.

The group disperses. Some of them are seen through the large French windows opening on the garden. Viscount Deeford embraces the opportunity to ask the Duchess's permission to pay his respectful addresses to her youngest daughter, Clarissa, Lady Pevensey. The Duchess temporizes a little before saying that she shall be very happy to hear that Clarissa has accepted him. The Duke and Lady Beaconsfield enter from the garden, followed by Mrs. Travers.

Lady Beaconsfield asks if Sir Michael Probert has been seen. Mrs. Noel listens. The Duchess replies icily that the Governor of the Bank of England is naturally much occupied, even in the vacation. Lady Beaconsfield replies simply that the Prime Minister is also much occupied; especially when he seems to be playing. Clarissa comes in with a rush from the garden, loaded with flowers. She tosses them aside and comes to her mother.

Clarissa. Oh, Mother! I'm so excited!

Duchess. I wish I could persuade you never to be excited.

Clar. Then you shouldn't have the greatest man in the world to stay here. [CHARLES *shows annoyance.*]

Lady Beaconsfield. There! She calls him the greatest man in the world, too.

To Clarissa, the Prime Minister transforms everything he touches, turning the landscape into fairyland, taking a primrose by the river's brim as a text for beautiful fancies. Charles thinks it doubtful whether a statesman should indulge in fancies. Clarissa gives him a look which ought to warn him that he is treading on dangerous ground.

Presently Disraeli himself enters with a small bunch of flowers. He tells the Duchess her peacocks are moulting and want more food and less water. He gives Lady Beaconsfield the flowers as his morning tribute, and then kisses her, much to the disgust of the others.

Mrs. Travers [*laughing*]. How ungallant to omit us!

Disraeli. My homage to Lady Beaconsfield is a homage to the entire sex.

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Lady B. [*protesting laughingly*]. No, no, Dizzy! I won't be put off like that! It's a personal love token, and you know it.

Dis. [*laughing*]. Lay not that flattering unction to thy soul! You know I married you for your money. [*Everybody is deeply shocked.*]

Lady B. All very well; but if 'twas to do over again, now you'd marry me for love.

Dis. Perish the thought! For all who marry for love either beat their wives or run away from them.

Charles [*indignantly*]. I trust you are jesting, sir!

Dis. [*lifting his eyeglass and looking at him a moment*]. Sir, I trust I am. But I can never be sure. [*Breaking off.*] Still no Probert?

To everybody's amazement he rings without asking leave. Then he remembers and asks if he may. He tells the servant who enters to tell Sir Michael Probert he wishes to speak to him. The servant is taken aback and glances at the Duchess, who nods to him. As Disraeli does not wish to go to a different room for his conference, the others scatter.

The Duchess tells Clarissa to entertain Deeford. Disraeli is interested upon overhearing the young man say to Clarissa that he is contemplating reforms upon his estate. Clarissa turns away from him coldly, saying that she is going to write up her diary while she still remembers the things that Mr. Disraeli said during their walk. Charles makes an angry gesture and goes out.

The butler flings a door open, announcing Sir Michael Probert. Sir Michael comes in and says to Disraeli directly that he is very busy. Disraeli carefully closes the windows while Probert watches him in wonder. Disraeli remarks that it is wonderful how voices carry. He reminds Probert of a note he wrote to him the night before. Probert did not think that was meant to be taken seriously.

Dis. Pardon me, in dead earnest.

Probert. Do you seriously mean you are thinking of purchasing the Suez Canal?

Dis. I have seldom meant anything half so seriously.

Pro. But it's not for sale.

Dis. It is for sale. Ismail is dying to sell.

Pro. And you ask the Bank of England to back you?

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Temporarily, until Parliament meets, Disraeli does want this backing. Probert declares he will never give his assent. He will not allow the bank to play at ducks and drakes with the money entrusted to its keeping. Disraeli's assurance that the Government will be at his back does not affect him. Mrs. Travers appears outside on the lawn, close to the casement.

Pro. Why in such a hurry?

Dis. Because Russia——

Pro. [*interrupting with a snort*]. Oh! That ancient bugbear!

Dis. That ever-present peril!—knows of this opportunity to purchase the highroad to India.

Pro. Then why hasn't she purchased it?

Dis. She's not ready—she has no fleet; but—she is watching us. She is watching me——

[MRS. TRAVERS *opens the centre casement and listens.*]

Pro. Ha! The spy mania!

Dis. And if she sees the slightest move on my part she will snap up the canal, fleet or no fleet!

They see Mrs. Travers innocently picking a flower from a bush outside the window. She nods pleasantly to them and passes on. Probert observes that she is a pretty woman. Disraeli says she has such pretty ears! Probert declares Disraeli's scheme to be hairbrained, and, moreover, unconstitutional; besides, the canal is a failure; it is silting up and soon the only ship that will be passing on it will be the ship of the desert. He disapproves of Disraeli's imperialistic ideas, warns him to remember Pharaoh, and rejoices that he has made the rash enterprise impossible.

That he has not by any means made the enterprise impossible, is Disraeli's rejoinder. Probert asks him where he will go for the money. Where Pharaoh went, is the reply; where all Christians go. He will go to Moses. In the unlikely event of Moses failing him, he may send for Probert again. Probert retorts that he will not come. He leaves the room. Lady Beaconsfield now comes in. She fears that her husband and Probert have quarrelled. That is not the case, he says; Probert has lost his chance.

Seeing Mrs. Travers and Clarissa coming from the garden, Disraeli asks his wife to go. He follows her. Cla-

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rissa is saying that Disraeli is a maker of history. Mrs. Travers inquires if he does not unburden himself to her quite freely. Not having the brains to participate in such conversations, she says Clarissa must sometimes tell her in a simple way what he has been saying. What, for instance, did he send for Probert for? Clarissa knows nothing about that.

Charles comes in, and Mrs. Travers withdraws. Charles manages to dismiss the subject of Mr. Disraeli, and tells Clarissa that he has had the honor of a conversation with her mother. He considers it his duty to marry. He goes on to describe the reforms that he has planned for his estate. She does not see what all that has to do with her. He replies that he has decided that in time she would become admirably suited to occupy the position that he has —adumbrated. He has to explain that he means outlined.

The manner of his proposal surprises her, that he, a man of twenty-five, should come to her, a girl of nineteen, with an essay on political economy. He explains that he is a man of heavy responsibilities, not a hero of romance. She is very much honored, but cannot accept the responsibilities. Then, with an outburst, she says he has made a horrible hash of the whole thing. She did like him. She liked him very much. He is entirely and spotlessly correct. But she is not. She should die at Dunelm Castle. His model cottages leave her cold, because she knows that the laborer wants bread, not bricks. If she ever marries, her husband will be a man who has got himself into dreadful tangles, so that she may sympathize with him and get him out of them. And he must be doing things all the time. She is sorry for him. It is dreadful to begin life handicapped with a title and a ready-made position. She gives a cry of joy as she sees Disraeli entering. He goes out angrily. Disraeli decides to play the rôle of matchmaker.

Charles, thinking that Disraeli has turned Clarissa's head by talking in a persuasive and magnetic way, and that in consequence he, as a younger man, seems uninspiring, unromantic. He seeks an opportunity to have a talk with Disraeli, and begins by saying flatly that he attributes Clarissa's refusal to Disraeli's influence. Disraeli likes his courage, and tells him to make Clarissa change

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her mind. Disraeli says he is interested in Charles because England needs men of his stamp.

Charles [*contemptuously*]. I cannot see that. England is doing very well. [*With a fine oratorical manner.*] She was never so prosperous as now. She has a wise aristocracy, an industrious middleclass, and a contented and happy peasantry. Other nations envy her.

Dis. Splendid! Splendid! How many old Tory squires I've heard talk just like that! And that's how they've been talking since the beginning of things. That's how they talked when we lost America; when the Indian mutiny burst upon us; when our soldiers froze and starved in the Crimea; when we deserted Denmark; and when we sat idle while France and Germany flew at each other's throats. It's just that talk that has lost us all our friendships.

Charles [*contemptuously*]. Ah!—— Continental friendships! Frog-eaters!—beer-swillers!

Dis. [*very nearly angry—masters himself*]. Ah—is that how you talked to Clarissa?

Charles. I do not discuss politics with women.

Dis. I do. [*He takes* CHARLES *by the arm and forces him down beside him on the ottoman.*] See, man! See! England is as isolated as a ship lying off the coast. Her crew know nothing of what they call the land-lubbers. They go on shore now and then for a debauch; and as they only hunt out the vice, they come back with a headache, and righteously thank God they are not as other men! I tell you a ferment is at work all over the world. Titanic forces are unchained in America; forces you have no conception of. The spirit of nationality has awakened in France, in Germany, in Italy. New wine has been poured into the old bottles, and an explosion must follow sooner or later. I shall not live to see it, but I hear the seething of the yeast! But you——! My God, what things you will witness! Take care you are not asleep! All the nations must expand, and everywhere our empire is in their way—Russia, for instance. Now, while England stands alone, while France is crippled, and before Germany has recovered—now is Russia's opportunity to snatch at India. With India lost, the whole fabric crumbles; and England sinks into insignificance: a Belgium at sea! [*Rising.*]

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Now do you see why Clarissa refused you? These are the things I have shown her. Do you wonder she wants a man of action? Do you wonder she will not be content with being a mere Duke's wife?

Disraeli tells him to grow from small ideals to greater; to pass from the Parish to the Empire. He turns to the subject of India, whether they shall hold it or whether they shall lose it. The solution is not war, he says, but a very small thing that men are laughing at, a ditch dug in sand. Charles comprehends. Disraeli motions him to silence and approaches the door on the left and opens it. Mrs. Travers follows the opening door. She pretends to have come to look for a book.

Disraeli asserts that a ditch dug in sand is the best soil for celery, explaining to Mrs. Travers that they are in the thick of a very interesting discussion. Mrs. Travers slips a book, that she was holding under her wrap, behind a piece of furniture when she thinks Disraeli is not looking. The Duke, Lady Beaconsfield, Lord and Lady Cudworth, and Lord and Lady Brooke and Clarissa come in. Disraeli finds the book and gives it to Mrs. Travers. He announces to all that Lord Deeford has done him the honor of accepting a secretaryship. Upon Mrs. Travers exclaiming that he will have much to teach the young man, he replies that he has already begun by telling him something that it took him many years to learn—that a ditch dug in sand gives the best soil for celery.

Disraeli's private room in Downing Street has a large window on one side opening on a glass-covered balcony. There is a great writing-table in the middle of the room. Three doors communicate with other apartments. One of them opens. Mr. Foljambe looks in and is about to enter, when, seeing one of the other doors opening, he withdraws. Mr. Tearle, Disraeli's secretary, comes in and places letters on a small table. As soon as he has gone Foljambe slips in with catlike swiftness. He stands at the corner of the writing-desk, watching the entrance door. With one hand he shuffles the letters, peering at them. He coaxes toward him one that is opened and tries to read it out of the corner of his eye. Disraeli enters suddenly, followed by Mr. Tearle.

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In the tone of a man with a just grievance, Foljambe complains that Disraeli entrusts nothing of importance to him, and even keeps him at work in a distant office. Disraeli replies that henceforth he will give him plenty to do. Important matters are coming up that very day, he says. Foljambe is anxious to hear more. Disraeli plays with him, telling him that he has a great drainage project, a matter of enormous expense, for which he is trying to arrange a loan. It is a scheme for the drainage of London, he says. He hands Foljambe a packet of papers and says he may look them over. Foljambe is disappointed and asks if there is nothing else. Disraeli shows him a report of the Secretary of State for India on the coaling stations and fortifications of the Gulf of Aden. He fears it is a dry subject. Foljambe believes the district will grow in importance with the development of the Suez Canal. Disraeli speaks very depreciatively of the canal.

Deeford enters with dispatches from Russia. Before long, while Disraeli is looking out of the window, he sees Foljambe, with the tail of his eye, turning over the dispatches, but he goes on chatting about trifles. The less work a Prime Minister does, says he, the fewer mistakes he makes. He asks Foljambe to make a note of the remark. Foljambe, watching Disraeli, deliberately puts the packet of white papers that Disraeli gave him on top of the dispatches, then makes a note in a notebook that he carries. He now picks up the dispatches with the white papers and moves toward the door as Disraeli comes to him. Disraeli tells him he may take up his quarters in that room. He takes the Russian dispatches from Foljambe, saying that picking them up was a natural mistake for him to make.

Mr. Hugh Meyers comes to see the Prime Minister. He reports that the money is on its way from Argentina and will be there in three weeks. Charles provokes a sharp rebuke by saying that he hopes the money is for the Suez Canal. Disraeli warns him that not a syllable must be breathed on that matter, and takes Mr. Meyers into another room. Foljambe returns to the room. He observes that Mr. Meyers was not sent for any paltry half million. Charles says curtly that he is very busy. Foljambe,

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coming to the back of Charles's chair and watching him keenly, says, "He's here for the Suez Canal."

Charles leaps out of his chair. The two men stand facing each other. At this moment the footman announces Lady Clarissa Pevensey and Mrs. Travers. Charles dismisses Mr. Foljambe, who goes to the door as the two ladies enter. Foljambe and Mrs. Travers exchange a look. He is going to whisper to her, but she motions him not to come near. He retires toward the door, but writes something on a small piece of paper, folds it, and places it on a pedestal before going out. Mrs. Travers takes the paper unobserved. Agatha explains to Charles that Mrs. Travers is staying in town with them on their way to Scotland. They came to take Lady Beaconsfield into the park, but she had gone.

Clarissa wants to go out on the balcony. Mrs. Travers says she will rest, and sits by the writing-desk. Charles and Clarissa go out on the balcony. Mrs. Travers reads Foljambe's note, and then taps on the desk with a paper knife. Foljambe enters as if at a preconcerted signal. He calls Agatha. She warns him to be careful. He says that Meyers came to see Disraeli about the canal. She tells him to start for Cairo at once and get instructions at Ostend. Disraeli reënters. He catches the last word but does not betray anything. He inquires for Mrs. Travers's husband. Foljambe, at the door, turns quickly before going out. Mrs. Travers calls Disraeli's attention to Clarissa and Charles on the balcony, and then after talking a minute says she must go without waiting for Clarissa.

Disraeli shows her out graciously, closes the door, and stands there thinking. He mutters "Ostend," "Ostend." He comes slowly to his table, behind it, and inspects it closely to see if anything has been disarranged. Finding nothing, he picks up a paper knife, and, sitting down, begins thinking again. While he is in deep thought he abstractedly beats a tattoo on the table with the paper knife. Foljambe quickly opens his door but starts back on seeing Disraeli. Disraeli has turned slowly to him; then looking at the paper knife in his hand he realizes the use it has been put to and that Foljambe and Mrs. Travers have had a meeting. He throws the knife down in disgust and calls Charles.

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Charles and Clarissa come in from the balcony. Disraeli questions Charles about what Foljambe was doing while Meyers was there. Charles replies that Foljambe was inquisitive, and that he snubbed him. Then Foljambe has the impertinence to say that Mr. Disraeli was seeing Meyers about the Suez Canal. Charles shows how he stood up and looked at Foljambe. With an exclamation of horror, Disraeli throws up his hands and strides across the room. He says Charles could not have told him more if he had talked an hour. Charles thinks it will be an easy matter to put Foljambe on his parole. He goes out but returns in a moment to say that Foljambe is not in his room.

Dis. No? Shall I tell you where he is? He is at Victoria station catching the ten-thirty express on his way to Ostend, to Trieste, and so on to Alexandria.

Charles [*alarmed*]. For God's sake, sir, who is he?

Dis. He is Mrs. Travers's husband. [CLARISSA *and* CHARLES *utter a cry of amazement.*] Yes—he and she are agents—spies—Russia has sent here to discover—what you have told them.

Charles. Have him arrested!

Dis. On what grounds? What has he done?

Charles. But why did you employ him, knowing he was a spy?

Dis. [*coming over toward* CHARLES]. *Because* I knew it! Because I wanted to have him under my own eye! For weeks he has been seen prying about in this room secretly. I knew it. [*Passing up to the back of the table and indicating papers on it.*] I've laid traps for him—letters for him to read. I had him on a false scent when you——

Clarissa wants to know why silence is of so much importance. Disraeli says that now it is of no importance whatever; in the future Charles must learn to control his features as well as his tongue. Charles does not see what future there can be for him. Disraeli tells him that the Khedive is in financial straits and anxious to sell his shares in the canal. France built the canal, he says, but is too poor to buy it; Russia covets it as a means of snatching India; England, as a means of defending it. Meyers has given Disraeli a blank check. The thing appeared to be done, but now that Foljambe knows, Russia knows. Dis-

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raeli must send a man to the Khedive with unlimited powers, ready to outbid anything, and ready to pay on the nail.

Charles. What must be the man's qualifications?

Dis. Ah——! A strong, stern, silent man; subtle and cunning; fighting wiliness with wiliness. [CLARISSA *bows her head on the table.*]

Charles [*anxiously*]. Have you such a man, sir?

Dis. [*sharply*]. I've sent for him. [*To* CLARISSA, *who is weeping silently.*] Why, child, what is the matter? [*He comes to her quickly.*] What is it, Clarissa?

Clar. Oh, don't take any notice! I am childish this morning. I suppose it is disappointment. For a moment —while you were speaking—I had hoped—that perhaps——[*She is looking at* CHARLES.]

Charles [*distressed*]. Ah, don't say it, Clarissa! Don't say it!

Dis. [*looking at* CHARLES, *and speaking slowly but with growing enthusiasm*]. Yes? Do say it, Clarissa! Do say it! Because there is another kind of man who might be twice as useful.

Clar. [*eagerly*]. What kind——?

Dis. [*coming toward* CHARLES]. A man so honest that the rogues would think him a rogue; so truthful that they'd swear he was lying; so simple that they'd never fathom him——

Charles [*rising indignantly*]. Why laugh at me, sir? I feel my folly bitterly enough!

To the amazement of Charles and Clarissa, Disraeli says that Charles is the man. He tells them that nearly all his successes in life have been founded on previous failures. No one will suspect Charles, who has only to meet all cunning with his stolid British face. But Charles may not be ready to meet the dangers. When once he is in Egypt, if his errand be known, his life will not be worth a moment's purchase. He asks Clarissa if she forbids Charles to go. After a struggle with herself, Clarissa answers that Charles must go. Disraeli wishes to tell Charles that there is a great reward awaiting his return, whether he is successful or not. Clarissa bows her head in assent. Charles must start at once to catch the Dover express and reach Cairo before Foljambe.

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Disraeli's study in his house at Hughenden is a cozy, oak-panelled room with a large French window looking out on a bright garden. The Prime Minister, dressed in gardening clothes and carrying a spade, is seen outside feeding the peacocks. He comes in followed by Potter, the gardener, who remonstrates with him for not being in his bed. The newspapers have reported that Disraeli is very ill, but he explains to Potter that it is Lady Beaconsfield whom the doctor is coming to see.

Clarissa is visiting at Hughenden and is impatiently awaiting the now belated news from Egypt. If she knew that Charles was in danger, she says she would go out alone and save him somehow, or if she knew he were ill she would nurse him and bring him home.

Disraeli, wishing to keep his eye on Mrs. Travers, has persuaded her to come to Hughenden. Mrs. Travers is perishing to know the truth, Disraeli having thrown out hints that Charles has succeeded in his mission.

Lady Beaconsfield, rather pale and frail looking, comes in with a dinner invitation from Lady Probert. She says she is quite able to go, as the Probert's country place is so near.

The arrival of a telegram throws Clarissa into a fever of excitement. The message, which is from Charles, is that "the celery is ripe to cut." Disraeli consults a green paper code, which gives the meaning of the message as, "the Suez Canal purchase is completed and the check accepted." Clarissa weeps with relief and thankfulness.

A cab from the station is seen driving up to the house. Disraeli does not want Mrs. Travers to come now, and tells Lady Beaconsfield to find a way to get rid of her. He decides to be ill. The visitor, however, is Meyers.

The instant Meyers enters it is evident he is in great distress. As soon as he is alone with Disraeli he announces that he is bankrupt. The bullion ship from Argentina has been sunk—scuttled. And that is not the worst of it. Ever since his interview with Disraeli in Downing Street rumors affecting his credit have been spread about, and now since this mysterious wreck he has been pressed. Some enormous power has been at work in the dark, he says; his liabilities have been bought up. He is thankful that the canal contract has not gone through. It is the

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greater shock, accordingly, to learn that his check has been given for the Khedive's shares. Disraeli swears that Meyers's bankruptcy shall not be made public. He assures him that something shall happen to prevent it, and the banker departs.

Disraeli is dazed at the prospect of disgrace. At this juncture Mrs. Travers arrives and he determines to detain her. Putting a medicine bottle and glass in a conspicuous place, he throws himself on the sofa. Mrs. Travers is shown in.

Dis. [*rising and holding out a weak and wavering hand*]. Sweet Mrs. Travers! So good of you. I'm very weak—very weak.

Mrs. Travers [*puts her lace scarf on the table and comes over to him, taking his hand in a great show of sympathy*]. I'm so sorry. What is the matter?

Dis. Well, I'm weak—I'm very weak. But glad to see you. So bright! So young! So—how is your husband?

Mrs. T. [*holding his hand*]. How good of you to ask—he's at Marienbad.

Dis. And you've come to see the sick man. Isn't it good of her, Mary? Do sit down!—there—where I can see you.

Mrs. Travers inquires about Lord Deeford. To the surprise of Lady Beaconsfield and Clarissa, Disraeli says that the young man is in Egypt. He asks for the telegram and shows it to Mrs. Travers. She thinks it very odd that any one should telegraph from Egypt about celery. Then her eyes fall on the green code, and seeing that no one is apparently watching she gradually draws it toward her and crumples it into her hand. She looks about for a way of escape to read the code. Going toward the window, she asks if she may look at the peacocks. Warned by Disraeli, Clarissa accompanies Mrs. Travers into the garden.

Disraeli sits at the table and quickly writes a note. He tells Lady Beaconsfield he wants her to bring Probert at once, and to take Clarissa with her so that he may talk to Mrs. Travers alone. Mrs. Travers comes back with Clarissa, evidently irritated at not having had a chance to look at the code. Lady Beaconsfield goes out with Clarissa and takes Mrs. Travers's cab. Mrs. Travers says she

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must be going, that her carriage is waiting. Disraeli replies that he has sent it away.

Dis. Ah, don't be angry——[*Fondling her hand.*] The dainty hand——

Mrs. T. [*smiling, but not quite sure of herself*]. Please——

Dis. [*toying with it*]. The supple fingers—so long and thin—so exquisitely shaped——

Mrs. T. [*protesting coquettishly*]. Mr. Disraeli——!

Dis. So quick to grasp things—unconsidered trifles—scraps of paper!

Mrs. T. [*frightened*]. Let me go! You are hurting!

Dis. [*holding her tight*]. In such a hurry to get away from the poor sick man—to get away—and read—[*he takes the code out of her glove and holds it up*]—the code?

When they met at the Towers, Disraeli says, he could not place her. He now recalls a delightful couple he met at Geneva in the sixties. They were very kind to some Russian exiles. Indeed, it was said they were decoys in Russian pay, tempting the exiles back to Russia—to Siberia—to death. Mrs. Travers's face has assumed an expression of horror at the memory of the past. A stifled cry escapes her lips, but she recovers herself and smilingly turns to Disraeli. She asks what all this had to do with her.

Dis. Ah, what indeed? You, the friend of Duchesses——! Of Dukes——! Good Mr. Lumley and his charming comrade were driven out of Geneva by the slanderers; and where do you think I saw him next? In Downing Street. He had changed his name to Foljambe. I was so very sorry for him I gave him work. But you did better. You gave him instructions to hurry to Trieste. [*With the ring on his finger, he raps on the table, reminding her of her signal to* FOLJAMBE *in Downing Street.*] Now do I remember you, dear Mrs. Lumley-Travers-Foljambe——

It was very weak to palm the code, Disraeli tells her. She had only to ask him what was meant by "the celery is ripe to cut," and he would have told her it meant, "the Suez Canal purchase is completed and the check accepted." Poor dear Lumley-Foljambe has had all that tiresome journey for nothing. She says that Deeford's success will cost Disraeli dear.

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Dis. [*wearily*]. That's the sort of thing Gladstone will say.

Mrs. T. [*triumphantly*]. It's what the world will say when it knows Meyers is bankrupt.

Dis. [*pretending amazement*]. When it knows—what?

Mrs. T. [*leaning over him and repeating it sweetly but with fiendish delight*]. Meyers is bankrupt—bankrupt—bankrupt——

Dis. [*weakly*]. Mrs. Travers—I am very ill—don't—don't jest with me.

Mrs. T. Meyers is bankrupt—and his check waste paper.

Dis. [*rising as if dazed*]. Wait—wait—let me gather my wits—ah, it's easy enough for you to say so, but why should I believe you? [*Sinking on sofa again.*]

Mrs. T. Because it was my invention. You thought to circumvent me with your apple-faced boy? What do you say now? [*Rising and snapping her fingers at him she goes down L.*]

Dis. You can't expect me to say much. I—I am a child in your hands.

Enter LADY BEACONSFIELD, SIR MICHAEL PROBERT, *and* CLARISSA.

Probert wants to know what Disraeli means by sending for him.

Dis. When we had that delightful interview at Glastonbury Towers.

Pro. Ha! I thought as much. Your harebrained scheme. Moses has failed you and you had to give it up. Well, it's no use appealing to me.

Dis. Moses has not failed me. I have carried the scheme through.

Pro. What? Do you mean to tell me you have purchased the Suez Canal?

Dis. The power and the glory of my country were at stake. I had to act quickly and I had to act on my own responsibility.

Pro. [*sternly*]. Then let me tell you, sir, you have committed a crime.

Dis. As Parliament was not sitting to vote the money I had to seek it elsewhere. Five million sterling. You refused.

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Pro. I did and I am proud of it.

Dis. So I went to the wealthiest private firm—to Hugh Meyers.

Pro. Ha! A Jew!

Dis. Meyers, not being a Party-man but a Patriot, saw the greatness of the idea and stood by me. I sent Deeford to Ismail. Spies had got wind of what I was doing and Russia knew; so Deeford had to go in a hurry—a race for an Empire! He has succeeded! Understand me. I put the matter quite simply. Deeford has bought the canal and has paid for it with Meyers' check drawn on the Bank of England. [PROBERT *starts.*] Wait! Meanwhile Russia has been at work by the intermediary [*bows to* MRS. TRAVERS] of one of the most fascinating women of my acquaintance—Meyers is bankrupt.

All that Probert has to say is that he warned Disraeli, and that it is of no use to appeal to him. In that case, Disraeli replies, he will command. He shows Probert a note giving Meyers unlimited credit and tells him to sign it. Probert refuses emphatically. He says he is not to be ordered about by an alien Jew. The alien Jew happens to be the better citizen, retorts Disraeli, and, moreover, he happens to be Prime Minister. The Bank of England is a national institution, he says, and it must save the nation.

Dis. When it is known that the lack of patriotism of one man has placed our country in the position of a person who is trying to pass a fraudulent check; exposed the nation to the ridicule of the world; lost the canal; lost India; baffled England; beaten her, disgraced her, dragged her through the mud, what becomes of the Bank?

Pro. [*violently*]. You cannot touch the Bank!

Dis. I'll smash the Bank! [MRS. TRAVERS *and* CLARISSA *rise.*] Parliament granted the Bank its charter; Parliament can withdraw it.

Pro. Good God!

Dis. And shall withdraw it at my bidding! Your board of directors will be swept away; your shareholders bankrupt, the Bank ruined and you disgraced. I am Prime Minister! I *can* do this, and if you don't sign, by God, I *will!* [*Pointing imperiously to the paper.*] Now!

Pro. [*after some hesitation, crosses to the table and signs*].

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There, take your paper. I have signed it. I've signed it to save the Bank. [*He staggers to the door. Just as he is going:*] It is outrageous that a man like you should have such power! [*Exit.*

Disraeli comes to the table and hands Mrs. Travers her lace scarf. She takes it and slowly goes to the door L.; then, turning, she smiles at him, nods her head pleasantly, and exits. Disraeli comes to the centre with the paper.

Clar. [*coming to him with joyous enthusiasm*]. Oh, Mr. Disraeli, thank God you have such power!

Dis. [*whimsically*]. I haven't, dear child; but he doesn't know that.

The Hall of Reception at Downing Street is crowded with a brilliant throng of diplomats, naval and military officers, Indian Rajahs, Turks, the Chinese Ambassador and his suite, and many ladies in Court dress. The men blaze with orders, the women with diamonds. The Duke of Glastonbury remarks to the Duchess that the queen is delighted with her new title, the Empress of India, and that Disraeli swayed the House when he announced it. Sir Michael Probert shakes hands patronizingly with Meyers, observing that he is on his legs again.

Disraeli, in Court dress with all his honors, comes in through the arch at the back. He is a little grayer than before. He walks with his hands behind his back, his head slightly bent, as if oblivious of his surroundings. The crowd make way for him. The Duchess of Glastonbury greets him with gushing cordiality. The only thing that mars Disraeli's triumph is the illness of Lady Beaconsfield. He is very anxious about her.

The curtains of the arch R. are drawn apart and eight footmen, preceded by Bascot, who bears a wand and motions the people aside, cross and go out through the Entrance of Honor. There is a loud buzz of conversation, which grows stronger as the footmen disappear, and the people begin to move about again. Presently the Duke, Probert, and Clarissa notice that Disraeli is speaking; they signal silence to the others and the conversation gradually subsides. Disraeli bows his head in thanks and begins again.

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Dis. [*quietly, but in a voice that arrests attention, so that presently all the people in the room are listening and close in on either side of him*]. Her Majesty is on her way. Before she arrives, I want to thank the men who have so splendidly stood at my side and made our enterprise successful. First, there is Mr. Hugh Meyers——

Several Voices [*calling*]. Mr. Meyers! Mr. Meyers! [MEYERS *comes forward modestly from behind.*]

Dis. [*taking his hand*].—concerning whose services I cannot speak too highly. Next there is Sir Michael Probert. At a moment of grave crisis he came to my aid, against his—may I call them—prejudices. [*Protest from* SIR MICHAEL.] Mr. Meyers—Sir Michael Probert, it is my privilege to inform you, that in recognition of your patriotic action, your sovereign has bestowed a peerage on each of you.

It is a triumph for Charles, too. He has only just arrived in London and meets Clarissa here for the first time since his return. He learns that the queen is anxious to confer the ribbon of the Bath upon him with her own hands.

Silence falls on the gathering as a telegram is brought to Disraeli. It is feared that it may be the news of Lady Beaconsfield's death. Disraeli stands rigid, not daring to open the dispatch. A shiver passes over him at a burst of merry music from the inner room. At this moment there is a movement in the group at the back.

Lady Beaconsfield enters slowly in Court dress and crowned with a diamond tiara, and comes down toward Disraeli, who has his back to her. The crowd are about to exclaim, but, with a smile, she motions them to silence. She comes to Disraeli and lays her hand on his arm. He shudders and turns toward her. He stares at her blankly, not trusting his senses.

Lady B. [*very tenderly*]. Dizzy!

Dis. [*hushed*]. Mary!—I didn't know——

Lady B. [*smiling*]. The doctor sent you a telegram, dear.

A military band off left crashes out "God Save the Queen." The crowd exclaim "Ah!"—"The queen!" and line up. The great doors on the L. are thrown open. A row of footmen is seen drawn up outside, bearing lighted

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candelabra, and there is a great blaze of light. Disraeli draws himself up. He gives Lady Beaconsfield his right hand, and they go out slowly to meet the queen. The Duke and Duchess come next, Charles and Clarissa follow, and the others fall into line as Disraeli and Lady Beaconsfield begin to move toward the Entrance of Honor.

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RUTHERFORD AND SON*

By Githa Sowerby

First played in London at the Court Theatre on January 31, 1912.

Argument: Old Rutherford has sacrificed family affections and the happiness of his children to a mastering passion, the business which he has created by a lifetime of toil, and upon learning that his son has discovered a valuable trade secretly attempts to wrest it from him with the determination of an iron will. It comes to old Rutherford's ears that one of his workmen who has assisted his son in experiments is the lover of his daughter, and while demanding the trade secret from the workman he turns his daughter out of the house. Will the workman betray the young man, and will old Rutherford be left without friends or kindred?

John Rutherford's house stands on the edge of the north country moor far enough from the village to serve its dignity and near enough to admit of the master going to and from the works in a few minutes. The living-room in which the family life has centred for generations is a big square room furnished in solid mahogany and papered in red, as if to mitigate the bleakness of the climate.

It is a December evening; Ann Rutherford, a sister of John Rutherford, is sitting by the fire knitting. She is a faded, querulous woman of about sixty. On the settle opposite to her is Mary Rutherford, wife of John Rutherford, Jr., a gentle, delicate looking woman of twenty-six. She is making a baby's cap.

Ann Rutherford complains that she has to find fault with one thing and another from morning till night. It is the attitude of most of the household. They bicker about

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the commonest matters. Ann remarks that there is no doing anything of late with her brother's daughter, Janet, who used to be bad enough as a lass, being passionate and hard to drive, but now is ten times worse since she has turned quiet.

Janet enters the room. She is a heavy, dark woman of about thirty-six, with an expressionless tired face and monotonous voice. All her movements are slipshod and aimless and she seldom raises her eyes.

Ann is always saying that Mary is a stranger in the household, although she has been there for some months. It is hard for Mary to get used to the bleakness of the north country and the harsh ways of her husband's family. She and John have been married for five years. All that time Mr. Rutherford never asked to see her. He had expected his son to make a more brilliant marriage. It is only for the child's sake that she came.

Young John Rutherford comes in. He is delicate looking and boyish in speech and manner, attractive in spite of the fact that he has been made a gentleman of and stopped halfway in the process. Ann and Janet are busy about the dinner and Mary talks with John. She feels that his father is still angry about their marriage, and longs for some way to get out of the house again. John tells her that as soon as his invention is set going they will have plenty of means.

When Mr. Rutherford said that John might come home with his wife and child it seemed like a chance to the young woman. It meant food and warmth, but she has found the place like a prison. She declares there is not a scrap of love in the whole house, and that no one has a right to be what his father is, never questioned and never answered back, like God, and the rest of them just living round him, neither children nor men and women, hating each other.

John tells her that never having a home of her own she doesn't know how to make excuses for family life; everybody knows it's like this more or less. She asks if he cannot see that life in this house is intolerable. He does not see why she should find it so. He knows it isn't over pleasant for her, but she needn't drive at him so. She seems to forget how ill he has been.

Mary wants to know how long it will be before the in-

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vention will pay. He soon gets cross at what he calls her incessant nagging about the kid and money. Ann notices that John is smoking, which is against the doctor's orders. When she thinks of the Sunday night when he was so bad, she says, she never thought to see him standing there now.

Richard Rutherford has come in from the hall. He wears the regulation clergyman's clothes and looks older than John, though he is in reality the younger by a couple of years. He is habitually overworked, and his face has a rather pathetic look of an over-weighted youth that finds life too much for his strength. His manner is extremely simple and sincere.

The subject of the glass works is discussed. John calls the works a Moloch, and explains to the women that Moloch was a sort of god to whom human sacrifices used to be made, and that it was considered a sort of honor to be dedicated to it, so that the victims gave themselves gladly to be crushed out of life under the great wheels. Janet says they are all dedicated to Rutherfords'.

Things have gone wrong with the dinner and Ann blames the servant for wasting her time with a young man, a nice thing for a woman who has turned forty, she says. John puts in that Susan is the ugliest woman he ever saw. It is a surprise to him to learn that Martin is the man who is supposed to be interested in her. He says the governor will soon put a stop to it; Martin practically lives at the works, and if he had a wife he'd get to be just like the other men, hankering after going home at the proper time, and all that.

When John Rutherford arrives he is accompanied by Martin. He is a heavily built man of sixty, with a heavy-lined face and tremendous shoulders, a typical north country man. There is a distinct change in the manner of the whole family as he comes in and walks straight to his desk, as if the door had scarcely interrupted his walk. Martin is a good-looking man of the best type of working man. Ann wants Martin to take a look at the range, and he goes out to the kitchen.

Rutherford complains that his mail is never put in one place for him. He goes to the settle and sits down, and when Janet brings him the letters he tells her to take off his boots. She does so with a sullen face and he accuses

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her of being sulky, saying she is spoiled. He is much irritated at a letter from the vicar asking for contribution for a new organ. He then turns his attention to John, asking when he is coming back to work and how about that invention of his.

Rutherford. Martin tells me you've hit on a good thing—a big thing. . . . I've got to hear more about it, eh?

John. If you like.

Ruth. What's that?

He looks up slowly under his eyebrows as if he saw the first possibility of opposition. Mary listens intently, her eyes constantly fixed on John. John says he would like to know how things are getting on at the works. He has the air of a child afraid of its father, but Rutherford says if he wants a bone flung to his dignity, things are bad.

The colliery strikes have been a very bad thing, and the balance sheet for the year shows a loss of four thousand on the previous year's working. Then the Americans have entered the market, and the bank from which he had been borrowing is difficult to manage. Rutherford comes back to his son's idea and asks what the preliminary cost is. John says it is nothing, as far as he knows, or something like that. His father asks him if he is going to show a profit of thousands a year on something like nothing.

The cost of working, according to John, will be reduced thirty per cent. He has carried out his experiments with a muffle furnace at his father's plant, taking what coals and materials he needed. His father wants to know if he has paid for these things by any chance, but says he has no objection if John can make it good. He asks John for his formula. John replies that he is not prepared to say what it is. There is a silence. Ann lowers her knitting with an alarmed look.

Ruth. [*heavily*]. A week or two ago in this room you told me it was perfected—ready for working to-morrow.

John. Yes—I told you so.

Ruth. [*suppressed*]. What d'ye mean? . . . Come, come, sir—I'm your father, I want an answer to my question—a plain answer, if you can give one.

John [*in a high-pitched, nervous voice*]. I—I'm a business man, and I want to know where I stand. [RUTHERFORD

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breaks into a laugh]. Oh, you turn me into an impudent school-boy, but I'm not. I'm a man, with a thing in my mind worth a fortune.

Ann. John! [*Asserting her authority.*] You must tell your father.

John [*very excited*]. I shan't tell him till I've taken out my patent, so there. [*There is a pause*—RUTHERFORD *stares at his son.*]

Ruth. [*heavily*]. What d'ye mean?

John. I mean what I say. I want my price.

Ruth. Your price—your price? [*Bringing his fist down on the table.*] Damn your impudence, sir. A whippersnapper like you to talk about your price.

John [*losing his temper*]. I'm not a whippersnapper. I've got something to sell and you want to buy it, and there's an end.

Ruth. To buy? To sell? And this to your father?

John. To any man who wants what I've made. [*There is a dead silence on this, broken only by an involuntary nervous movement from the rest of the family. Then* RUTHERFORD *speaks without moving*]

Ruth. Ah! So that's your line, is it? . . . This is what I get for all I've done for you. . . . This is the result of the schooling I give you.

Rutherford says ironically that his son's schooling did him a lot of good. He has idled away his time with books and poetry when he should have been working, and has married a wife who bears him a bairn that he can't keep. Rutherford has toiled and sweated to give his son a name he'd be proud to own, he says, worked early and late, toiled like a dog when other men were taking their ease, plotted and planned to get his chance, taken it and held it when it came till he could have burst with the struggle. And his son talks of selling to him, when everything his son will ever make could not pay back the life he has given to him. John replies that he has worked for five years without salary.

Ruth. You've been put to learn your business like any other young fellow. I began at the bottom—you've got to do the same. There'll not be two masters at Rutherfords' while I'm on my legs.

John. That's it, that's it. You make a servant of me.

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Ruth. What do you suppose your work's worth to Rutherfords'? Tell me that.

John. What's that matter now? I've done with it. I've found a way out.

Ruth. A way out—of what?

John [*rather taken aback*]. Well—you don't suppose I'd choose to live here all my life?

Ann [*taking it personally*]. And why not, pray?

Ruth. Your father has lived here, and your grandfather before you. It's your inheritance—can't you realize that?—what you've got to come to when I'm under ground. We've made it for you, stone by stone, penny by penny, fighting through thick and thin for close on a hundred years.

John. Well, after all, I can't help what you and grandfather chose to do.

Ruth. Chose to do! There's no chose to do. The thing's there. You're my son—my son that's got to come after me.

John exclaims in despair that their ideas of life are utterly different. His father retorts that if he knew something about life he'd stop having ideas about it. Rutherford has had sixty years of it, and knows that life is work and rearing children to work when you are gone.

John implores his father to try to see things his way for once. He knows that his father has built up the works and has a right to be proud of it, but he doesn't like the place and does not think it is worth his while. He has his own life to think of. If he had done that sooner he would be better off. For one thing he would not have married. He glances at Mary and adds that he doesn't regret it, but he cannot see that his father has gotten anything out of life but the ceaseless grind.

Returning to the subject of the invention Rutherford declares that his son cannot protect it with a patent. He will have to tell what his formula is before any one will help him with it, and then whoever he goes to will take advantage of him. He says that John is undertaking to produce ordinary white metal at a third of the usual cost, and has worked out his experiments in a muffle furnace. His experience of muffle furnaces is that they are excellent for experimenting in a small way, but that no man living can

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estimate the cost of the idea until it is worked out on a big scale.

John asks for a chance to work it out on a larger scale in one of his father's furnaces, but his father puts him off. John says that Martin has helped him in his work and he will let Martin carry out the test if his father prefers. Rutherford looks at his son suddenly as if struck by a new thought. John pleads desperately for a fair chance.

With a sudden movement Rutherford rises saying, fair chance be damned. He has told his son what he must do. He goes out leaving John staring after him. John calls his father an old bully but his aunt says the best way is to apologize and do what his father says. John declares that he would rather starve, he will go to London or Canada.

John. He shan't have me to grind the life out of me by inches—and he shan't have my metal. If he thinks he is going to pick my brains and give me nothing for it, he'll find himself jolly well mistaken. I don't care. Once and for all I'm going to make a stand. And he can jolly well go to the devil. [MARY *speaks for the first time, in a low voice.*]

Mary. What are you making a stand for?

John [*stopping to look at her*]. Good Lord! Mary, haven't you been listening?

Mary. Yes, I've been listening. You said you wanted your price. What is your price?

Janet. All the profits and none of the work—that's John's style. [*She sits on the settle, her chin on her hands.*]

John. A lot you know about it. [MARY *speaks again.*]

Mary. If you get your price, what will you do with it?

Janet. He won't get it.

John [*to* JANET]. Do you suppose I'm going to sit down under his bullying?

Janet. You've done it all your life.

John. Well, here's an end of it then.

Janet. No one ever stands out against father for long —you know that—or else they get so knocked about, they don't matter any more. [*She looks at* MARY, *who has made an involuntary movement.*] Oh, I don't mean he hits them—that's not his way.

John reiterates that he is not going to give in and he curses Rutherfords'. Janet replies that in the end he will

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have to go under like the rest of them. He may make a row and threaten his father to run away, but finally he will give up his receipt, or whatever he calls it, and it will go to help Rutherfords'. Then after a bit he will let it slide. They have all wanted things one way or another and have let them slide. John calls her a disagreeable old maid and goes out calling impatiently to Mary to follow.

She follows him. Janet remains in the same attitude —her chin on her hands, staring sullenly before her. Suddenly she bows her face in her arms and begins to cry. Martin comes in from the kitchen on his way out. As he reaches the door leading to the hall, he sees her and stops.

Martin [*in a whisper*]. My lass! [*She starts and gets up quickly.*]

Janet. Martin! Martin!

He blunders over to her and takes her in his arms with a rough movement, holding her to him—kisses her with passion and without tenderness, and releases her suddenly. She goes to the fireplace, and leans her arms on the mantelpiece, her head on them—he turns away with his head bent. They stand so.

Martin [*as if the words were dragged from him*]. Saturd'y night—he's away to Wickham—at the Tarn. . . . Will ye come?

Janet. Yes.

Martin goes to the door at back. As he reaches it John Rutherford comes into the room with some papers in his hand. In crossing between the two, he stops suddenly as if some thought had struck him.

Martin. Good night, sir.

Ruth. Good night. [*He stands looking at* JANET *till the outer door shuts.*] Why don't you say good night to Martin? It 'ud be more civil—wouldn't it?

Janet. I have said it. [*Their eyes meet for a moment—she moves quickly to the door.*] I'll tell Susan you're ready.

Rutherford is left alone. He stands in the middle of the room with his papers in his hand—motionless, save that he turns his head slowly to look at the door by which Martin has gone out.

It is 9 o'clock three evenings later. John Rutherford sits staring in front of him with a heavy brooding face.

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Dick comes in quietly and asks if his father can spare him a minute. He has been offered a curacy at Southport, where there seems to be a chance of more success. He has been discouraged in his work at home, where he has been conscious of his father's silent antagonism.

To Dick's surprise his father seems to feel no resentment, but tells him to wear his collar stud at the back if he likes, for so far as his father is concerned Dick might just as well have never been born. There are more ways than one of shirking life, says Rutherford, and religion is one of them. He wishes only to be rid of Dick, but Dick falteringly explains that he has told Mrs. Henderson that she might call to see his father.

Mrs. Henderson's boy was caught pilfering money at the works, and Dick has promised to beg another chance for the boy. When the woman comes she is slightly drunk and is very persistent. Rutherford tells her harshly that the matter is ended. It is not the boy's first offence. He tries to hasten the woman's departure, but she breaks out vehemently, saying that his grandfather was a potman like her own, that his son is the laughing stock of the parish, and that his daughter goes with a workingman. She bangs the door after her.

Dick is shocked at the reflection on Janet. He has heard other talk, something about a woman with a shawl over her head being seen on the road to Martin's cottage late one evening. At the name "Martin" it is Rutherford's turn to be startled. Only recently Martin gave up his cottage near the works and took a more distant one. Rutherford stands by the table, his shoulders drooped, his face suddenly old.

At this moment John enters the room and stops short, seeing something is the matter. Rutherford turns on him sharply, asking him what the devil he wants. He curses both of his sons, and tells them to send for Martin and go to bed.

John. What do you want Martin for at this time of night?

Ruth. That's my business.

John. About my metal——

Ruth. Your metal! What the devil's your metal got to do with it!

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John [*excited*]. Martin's got it. You know that. You're sending for him. Martin's honest—he won't tell you.

John maintains that what he asks is fair and just to both of them. His father puts him off, saying he will settle with him the next day, and his sons leave him. Martin comes in and a moment later Janet brings in a lamp. There is a moment's silence while she and Martin look at each other before she goes out. Martin asks hoarsely what is wanted. To his surprise the master asks for the receipt of Mr. John's metal.

Martin. It's Mr. John's own—what belongs to him—I canna do it.

Ruth. On your high horse, eh, Martin? You can't do a dirty trick—you can't, eh?

Martin. A dirty trick! Ye'll never be asking it of me—you never will——

Ruth. I am asking it of ye. We've worked together five and twenty years, master and man. You know me. You know what there is 'll stop me when I once make up my mind. I'm going to have this metal, d'ye understand. Whether Mr. John gives it me or I take it, I'm going to have it.

Martin. It's Mr. John's own; if it's ever yourn, he must give it to ye himself. It's not for me to do it. He's found it, and it's his to do what he likes wi'. For me to go behind his back—I canna do it.

Rutherford gets out of his chair and begins to pace up and down, speaking deliberately, with clumsy gestures. He tells Martin that they have been losing slowly and surely for seven years. Rutherfords' is going down, and he has got to pull her up somehow. His son has turned against him after all he has done for him and demands his price—his price for mucking round with a bit of a muffle furnace in his play hours. Martin says that John has happened on a thing that is worth a bit. Rutherford finds that the worst of it; when some luck comes it is put into his son's hands to give him or not as if he were a lord.

They cannot go on, Rutherford continues; ten years more will see them out. He takes Martin's word for it that John has made a metal that is worth a fortune, and asks if they are going to sit by and watch him fooling it

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away. Martin has been through the long struggle with him, he says, and now at the end of it they come up against this bit of foolishness. If Martin will give him the receipt, neither of them will gain anything by it, but Mr. John will have Rutherfords' when he is gone. Finally the old workman yields, saying Mr. John will never forgive him, and promises to give old Rutherford the receipt in the morning. After he has gone Janet comes in to put things straight for the night.

Ruth. How long has this been going on between you and Martin? [*She puts a tray down and stands staring at him with a white face.*]

Janet. How long?

Ruth. Answer me.

Janet. September about—when Mary and Tony came. [*There is a long silence. When it becomes unbearable she speaks again.*] What are you going to do? [*He makes no answer.*] You must tell me what you're going to do?

Ruth. Keep my hands off ye.

Janet. You've had him here.

Ruth. That's my business.

Janet [*speaking in a low voice as if she were repeating a lesson*]. It wasn't his fault. It was me. He didn't come after me. I went after him.

Ruth. Feel proud o' yourself?

Janet. You can't punish him for what isn't his fault. If you got to punish any one, it's me. . . .

Ruth. How far's it gone?

Janet [*after a pause*]. Right at first—I made up my mind that if you ever found out, I'd go right away, to put things straight. [*She goes on presently in the same toneless voice.*] He wanted to tell you at the first. But I knew it would be no use. And once we'd spoken—every time was just a little more. So we let it slide. . . . It was I said not to tell you.

Ruth. Martin . . . that I trusted as I trust myself.

Janet. I'll give him up.

Ruth. You can't give him back to me. He was a straight man. What's the good of him now? You've dragged the man's heart out of him with your damned woman's ways. [*She looks at him.*]

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Janet. You haven't turned him away—you couldn't do that!

Ruth. That's my business.

Janet. You couldn't do that—not Martin. . . .

When she says there will be no need for anybody to know it was Martin, he tells her that everybody is talking about them now. It is he, her father, who has got to be the laughing stock. He says he has a right to have his children live respectably in the station in which he puts them. She tells him that he has no pity; nobody ever came after her, even when she was young, he saw to that. Half her life was gone, well nigh all of it that mattered. He asks what more she could want than the life he gave her. The women down in the village know what she wanted, she says, with their bairns wrapped in their shawls and their men to come home at night time. She envied them their pain, their poorness, the very times they hadn't bread, and exclaims contemptuously at the idea of being a lady, she with work for a man in her hands, passion for a man in her heart.

When he tells her that she cannot go back from the station that he has raised his family to, she says that every one laughs at the airs of her brothers, and that Mary is a little common work-girl no real gentleman would have looked at. He has not made them different by keeping them from people. They are just the same as the others. It is in their blood, in their hands and faces. Martin loved her honestly she says.

Janet [*passionately*]. Martin loves me honest. Don't you come near! Don't you touch that! . . . You think I'm sorry you've found out—you think you've done for me when you use shameful words on me and turn me out o' your house. You've let me out o' gaol! Whatever happens to me now, I shan't go on living as I lived here. Whatever Martin's done, he's taken me from you. You've ruined my life, you with your getting on. I've loved in wretchedness, all the joy I ever had made wicked by the fear o' you. . . . [*Wildly.*] Who are you? Who are you? A man—a man that's taken power to himself, power to gather people to him and use them as he wills—a man that'd take the blood of life itself and put it into the

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works—into Rutherfords'. And what ha' you got by it —what? You've got Dick, that you've bullied till he's a fool—John, that's waiting for the time when he can sell what you've done—and you got me—me to take your boots off at night—to well-nigh wish you dead when I had to touch you. . . . Now! . . . Now you know!

About 11 o'clock on the following morning Janet is sitting at the table talking to Mary. She is surprised to find that Mary knew all the time about her and Martin. She tells her now that when her father returns he is to find her gone, that no one is to speak of her, and that she is never to set foot in the house again. Yet all the night she has barely slept for the hope in her heart. She had a vision of things as they were going to be when Martin would come to her with his head up and the lie gone out of his eyes. She has packed all her things in the box that her mother had when she came to the house, and is ready to go. Mary tells her to remember that if she ever wants help she will come to her.

Martin comes in from the hall and stands in the doorway, his head bent. He looks spent, broken, and at the sight of him the hope dies slowly out of Janet's face. His master has discharged him and he is dazed by the blow. It is bitterly cold out of doors and Martin has been walking about aimlessly for hours. She says that he should have come to her and she would have helped him.

Martin. There's no help.

Janet. You say that now because your heart's cold with the trouble. But it'll warm again—it'll warm again. I'll warm it out of my own heart, Martin—my heart that can't be made cold, not if he killed me. Why, last night he was just the same with me as he's been with you. I know it all—there's nothing you feel that I don't know. We'll face it together, you and me, equal—and by and by it'll be different. What we done was for love—people give up everything for love, Martin, every day; they say there's some one in the world that does it. Don't 'ee take on so—don't 'ee.

Nothing can turn Martin's mind from his grief. He says brokenly that he would have lost everything in the world to know that he was true to Rutherford, as he had

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been when she looked at him with the love in her face. She gave him the bitter with the sweet, for every time he had to face her father it was with a heart like lead. She reminds him that he is free and can make a fresh start. They have their love that nothing can break, and she will work for him to comfort him morning, noon, and night.

As if not hearing her, he says that no one must say that Rutherford's daughter wasn't made an honest woman of. Her father has nothing to do with her, she returns. It is time Martin left off doing things because of him. The master he loved, she says, is not great, but hard and cruel, cruel as death. He keeps trying to silence her and asking why she talks so wildly. She wouldn't have turned against him, she goes on, even if he had nearly killed her, and still he sets up her father's love against hers.

Martin gets up and moves away from her. He has been a bad servant he says, faithless. Womenfolk have their fancies, and maybe she doesn't know the harshness that's in the heart of every man who fights his way in the world when he comes into the four walls of his bit of a house at night and sees the littleness of it. Finally, telling her that he has watched the master year in and year out and never seen him do a thing or say a thing in which he wasn't in the right, he takes up his cap saying he must see Mr. John.

Janet [*speaks in a dull, toneless voice, kneeling where he left her*]. He says I have to be gone by the time he comes in. Where am I to go to? [*He turns to look at her with a puzzled face.*]

Martin. Ay. There's that.

Janet. Where am I to go to?

Martin. It would be best to go a bit away—where ye wouldna be seen for a while.

Janet. Where's the place—far enough?

Martin. There's Horkesley—up the line. Or Hillgarth yonder. He's not likely to be knawed thereabouts.

Janet. I haven't any money. [MARTIN *slowly counts out some coins on the table.*]

Martin. It'll be a hard life for you, and you not used to it. Work early and late—wi' a bairn mebbee. Bitter cold i' the winter mornings wi' the fire to light and the breakfast to get, and you not used to it; we mun just bide it,

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the pair on us. Make the best of it. I've saved two hundred pounds. There'll be summat to get along on whilst I look for a job. Afterwards we mun just bide it. [*There is a silence.*]

Janet [*without bitterness*]. Take up your money.

Martin [*puzzled*]. It's for you, lass.

Janet. Take up your money. I'll have no need of it. [*After a moment he picks it up and returns it to his pocket.*]

Janet [*still kneeling*]. After all, you'd give the world to ha' been true to him—you'd give me, that you said was the world. He'd have you back if it wasn't for me. He needs you for the works. If I was out of it there'd be no more reason—you'd go back, and people would think it all a mistake about you and me. Gossip. After a bit he'd forget and be the same. Because he needs you for the works. Men forgive men easy where it's a woman, they say, and you could blame me, the pair of you. Me that gave you the word. [MARY *comes in hurriedly.*]

John comes in excited and nervous and Martin thinks he knows what he has done, but John does not. When Martin says that he has given the secret to his father at first John will not believe him, but Martin tells him how his father sent for him and asked him for it, and at the time he thought the master was right, though he does not recall just how. Mary suddenly realizes what it all means, that Rutherford will take all the money from the invention. John, almost in tears, berates Martin as a thief, and says he is as bad as his father. Martin recalls the reason why he gave up the recipe. It was to be all for Rutherfords'. That was what he said. No one answers, and after a moment he goes out.

John suddenly goes to Rutherford's desk and gets out the cash box, which contains twenty-three pounds. Taking it, he says that twenty-three thousand is more like what his father owes him. Mary beseeches and implores him to put back the money, but it is in vain, even when she reminds him that one day Tony will find out that his father stole money. They have got to live decently for him, she says. John answers her like an angry child. She can do it, he tells her. He is sick of it.

Janet, who all this time has been kneeling where Martin

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left her, gets up suddenly, stumbling forward as if she were blind. The other two stop involuntarily and watch her as she makes for the door, dragging her shawl over her head. As the outer door shuts on her Mary with a half-cry makes a movement to follow, but John holds her, continuing to talk angrily. He might have been rich, he says, if he had been allowed to go his own way. For one thing, she was always dragging him down. Now he is going away and will starve before he comes back.

They reason out the situation and see that the only thing for Mary to do is to remain where she is until John has provided a place for her. When it comes to parting, however, she breaks down and he takes her in his arms. Ann begins to weep upon learning that John has left. She says it is not ten minutes ago since she saw Janet going along the road with her shawl over her head like a common working lass. Where it is to end she is sure she cannot tell. Mary suggests that perhaps it is ended.

Mary is setting the table when Rutherford returns. He notices that she lays only three places. He thinks John is trying a bit of a bluff, but the empty cash box changes his mind. He declares with an oath that John shall not come back. He would sooner have seen him in his grave than have him do what he has done. He drops heavily into an armchair before asking why Mary hasn't gone, too, and made an empty house of it.

She tells him that she is not going just yet, and then says that until he came in just now he had not spoken to her half a dozen times, although she has lived in his house for nearly three months. Every slight that can be done without words he has put upon her, and never a day has passed but he has made her feel she had no right there. Now she has a bargain to make with him. There is no love in it, only money—money that pays for life. She has something to sell that he wants to buy. That is her son.

John is gone, and Richard, and Janet. They will not come back. He is alone and getting old, with no one to come after him and there will be an end of all his work. What she asks is for her boy. She wants a chance of life for him, his place in the world. John can't give him that because he's made so. If he will give her what she asks

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she will give him the boy on one condition. She is to stay there. He need not speak to her unless he wants to. For ten years the boy is to be absolutely hers. He must not interfere or frighten him.

Ruth. And after that?

Mary. He'll be yours.

Ruth. To train up. For Rutherfords'? You'd trust your son to me?

Mary. Yes.

Ruth. After all? After Dick, that I've bullied till he's a fool? John, that's wished me dead?

Mary. In ten years you'll be an old man; you won't be able to make people afraid of you any more.

Ruth. Ah! Because of that? And because I have the power?

Mary. Yes. And there'll be money for his clothes —and you'll leave the works to him when you die. [*There is a silence. He sits motionless, looking at her.*]

Ruth. You've got a fair notion of business—for a woman.

Mary. I've earned my living. I know all that that teaches a woman.

Ruth. It's taught you one thing—to have an eye to the main chance.

Mary. You think I'm bargaining for myself?

Ruth. You get a bit out of it, don't you?

Mary. What?

Ruth. A roof over your head—the shelter of a good name—your keep—things not so easy to come by, my son's wife, wi' a husband that goes off and leaves you to live on his father's charity. [*There is a pause.*]

Mary [*slowly*]. There'll be a woman living in the house—year after year, with the fells closed round her. She'll sit and sew at the window and see the chimneys flare in the dark; lock up, and give you the keys at night——

Ruth. You've got your bairn.

Mary. Yes, I've got him! For ten years. [*They sit silent.*] Is it a bargain?

Ruth. Ay. [*She gets up with a movement of relief. As he speaks again she turns, facing him.*] You think me a hard man. So I am. But I'm wondering if I could ha' stood up as you're standing and done what you've done.

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Mary. I love my child. That makes me hard.

Ruth. I used to hope for my son once, like you do for yours now. When he was a bit of a lad I used to think o' the day when I'd take him round and show him what I had to hand on. I thought he'd come after me—glad o' what I'd done. I set my heart on that. And the end of it's just this—an empty house—we two strangers, driving our bargain here across the table.

Mary. There's nothing else.

Ruth. You think I've used him badly? You think I've done a dirty thing about this metal?

Mary. It was his.

Ruth. I've stolen it behind his back—and I'm going to make money out of it?

Mary. I don't know—I don't know.

Ruth. It'll come to your son.

Mary. Yes.

Ruth. Because I done that he'll have his chance, his place i' the world. What would ha' gone to the winds, scattered and useless, 'll be his. He'll come on, young and strong, when my work's done, and Rutherfords' 'll stand up firm and safe out o' the fight and the bitterness —Rutherfords' that his grandfather gave his life to build up.

Mary [*stopping him with a gesture*]. Hush!

Ruth. What is it? [*They both listen.*] The little lad. He's waking! [MARY *runs out. The room is very silent as* RUTHERFORD *sits sunk in his chair thinking.*]

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SHENANDOAH*

By Bronson Howard

First played in Boston at the Boston Museum on November 19, 1888.

Argument: Kerchival West, an officer in the Union army who is in love with a Southern girl at the outbreak of the Civil War, provokes the hatred of a renegade Northerner living in the South. West's enemy makes more than one attempt to take his life, and convinces a Union general that West is the lover of his wife. Will West survive to marry his Southern sweetheart, and will the general's wife be cleared of suspicion?

In the twilight of dawn the people of Charleston are awaiting the moment when the Confederate batteries will open fire on Fort Sumter. The grim walls of the old fort can be seen from a residence on the shore of the bay where two young officers who were classmates at West Point expect to be made enemies by civil war. Robert Ellingham, a Virginian, declares that every loyal son of his state will follow her flag. That is his religion. Kerchival West of New York replies that if his state should go against the old flag the state might go to the devil. That is his religion.

A mysterious occurrence in the house the evening before engages some of the attention of the young men. West heard a scream and found Mrs. Haverill, the wife of his general, in a faint at the door of her room. Ellingham knows that a guest in the house, Edward Thornton, has been very pressing, not to say insolent, in his attentions to the lady. Thornton came to Charleston some years previously from the North, and gained the reputation of being a very unscrupulous man. It was rumored at one

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time that he had entered a lady's room at night, but as he killed the lady's husband in a duel the scandal was dropped.

Two young girls, West's sister Madeline and Ellingham's sister Gertrude, come in to borrow their brothers' field glasses to watch the bombardment. At the same moment a rocket is seen to soar into the sky from Fort Johnson. Another is sent up in answer from Fort Moultrie.

Madeline [*angrily*]. Ah! General Beauregard is a bad, wicked man!

Gertrude. Oh! Madeline! You are a bad, wicked Northern girl to say such a thing.

After exchanging a few more sharp reproaches they rush into each other's arms, sobbing, and kiss each other vigorously.

The two men confide in one another that each loves the other's sister.

Kerchival tells Gertrude that he has been ready half a dozen times this very night to tell her something, but still he hesitates.

Kerchival. It is easy enough to set the batteries around Charleston Harbor, but the man who fires the first shot at a woman——

Gert. Woman!

Ker. At the American flag—must have nerves of steel.

Gert. You Northern men are so slow, to——

Ker. I have been slow; but I assure you, Miss Gertrude, that my heart——

Gert. What subject are we on now?

Ker. You were complaining because I was too slow.

Gert. I was doing nothing of the kind, sir!—let me finish, please. You Northern men are so slow, to believe that our Southern heroes—Northern men and Southern heroes—you recognize the distinction I make—you won't believe that they will keep their promises. They have sworn to attack Fort Sumter this morning, and—they—will do it. This "American Flag" you talk of is no longer our flag: it is foreign to us! It is the flag of an enemy!

Ker. [*tenderly and earnestly*]. Am I your enemy?

Gert. You have told me that you will return to the North, and take the field.

Ker. Yes, I will. [*Decisively.*]

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Gert. You will be fighting against my friends, against my own brother, against me. We shall be enemies.

Ker. [*firmly*]. Even that, Gertrude—[*she looks around at him, he looks squarely into her eyes as he proceeds*]—if you will have it so. If my country needs my services, I shall not refuse them, though it makes us enemies! [*She wavers a moment, under strong emotion, and turns away; sinks upon the seat, her elbow on the back of it, and her tightly clenched fist against her cheek, looking away from him.*]

Gert. I will have it so! I am a Southern woman!

Kert. We have more at stake between us, this morning, than a cigar-case and a box of gloves.

Mrs. Haverill coming in quickly notices tears in Gertrude's eyes, and taking her aside warns her not to let coquetry trifle with her heart, reminding her of a confession that she made to her the night before. Gertrude is startled to remember it, and declares that she will make her love more of a secret than before.

Before leaving for the North Mrs. Haverill wants to send a message to her husband's son, Frank, and asks Kerchival to take it for her to Charleston. Frank was the son of the general's first wife. The boy got into trouble in New York and ran away to escape arrest. His father will not see him, and Mrs. Haverill is the only person he can turn to. Mrs. Haverill also tells Kerchival that she does not wish to have her husband learn of her fainting spell.

General Haverill joins the others in the parlor. He has found a handkerchief with West's initials on it in his wife's room. Mrs. Haverill drops into a chair. The general glances quickly from her to Kerchival and a cloud passes over his face. Then, with a movement as if brushing away a passing suspicion, he smiles pleasantly and talks with his wife.

Questioned about her apparent agitation and the presence of the handkerchief in her room, Mrs. Haverill replies that she does not wish to say anything more just yet about something that has occurred, reminding her husband that there has never been a shadow between them. He assures her that he trusts his honor and happiness to her completely.

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She wishes that she might take some kind word from him to Frank. At first he says that he will do no more than supply Frank with the necessities of life, but finally he gives her his miniature of herself for the boy. As the general is going out of the room Thornton enters.

Thornton. Mrs. Haverill! I wish to offer you an apology.

Mrs. H. I have not asked for one, sir!

Thorn. Do you mean by that that you will not accept one?

Mrs. H. [*aside*]. What can I say? [*Aloud.*] Oh, Mr. Thornton—for my husband's sake, I——

Thorn. Ah! You are afraid that your husband may become involved in an unpleasant affair. Your solicitude for his safety, madame, makes me feel that my offence to-night was indeed unpardonable. No gentleman can excuse himself for making such a mistake as I have made. I had supposed that it was Lieutenant Kerchival West, who——

Mrs. H. What do you mean, sir?

Thorn. But if it is your husband that stands between us——

Mrs. H. Let me say this, sir: whatever I may fear for my husband, he fears nothing for himself.

Thorn. He knows? [*Looking at her keenly.*]

Kerchival West enters and stops, looking at them.

Thorn. You are silent. Your husband does know what occurred to-night; that relieves my conscience. [*Lightly.*] General Haverill and I can now settle it between us.

Mrs. H. No, Mr. Thornton! My husband knows nothing, and I beg of you, do not let this horrible affair go further.

Kerchival steps forward and asks for the letter that Mrs. Haverill was going to entrust to him. She pauses a moment, wondering how much of her conversation with Thornton he has overheard, and then goes to write the letter.

Ker. [*quietly*]. Mr. Thornton, you are a scoundrel! Do I make myself plain?

Thorn. You make the fact that you desire to pick a quarrel with me quite plain, sir; but I choose my own quarrels and my own enemies.

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Ker. General Haverill is my commander, and he is beloved by every officer in the regiment.

Thorn. On what authority, may I ask, do you——

Ker. The honor of General Haverill's wife is under our protection.

Thorn. Under your protection? You have a better claim than that, perhaps to act as her champion. Lieutenant Kerchival West is Mrs. Haverill's favorite officer in the regiment.

Ker. [*approaching him*]. You dare to suggest that I——

Thorn. If I accept your challenge, I shall do so not because you are her protector, but my rival.

Ker. Bah! [*Striking him sharply on the cheek with glove. The two men stand facing each other a moment.*] Is it my quarrel now?

Thorn. I think you are entitled to my attention, sir.

Ker. My time here is limited.

Thorn. We need not delay. The Bayou La Forge is convenient to this place.

Ker. I'll meet you there, with a friend, at once.

Thorn. It will be light enough to see the sights of our weapons in about one hour. [*He bows and goes out.*]

Gertrude rides up outside the window on her pet horse, Jack, a magnificent black thoroughbred. She gives the reins to a servant and comes in.

Gert. I have the very latest news from the headquarters of the Confederate Army in South Carolina. At twenty minutes after three this morning General Beauregard sent this message to Major Anderson in Fort Sumter: "I shall open fire in one hour!" The time is up—and he will keep his word!

Ker. Gertrude! I must speak to you; we may never meet again; but I must know the truth. I love you. [*Seizing her hand.*] Do you love me? [*She looks around at him as if about to speak; hesitates.*] Answer me! [*She looks down with a coquettish smile, tapping her skirt with her riding whip.*] Well? [*A distant report of a cannon, and low rumbling reverberations over the harbor. She turns suddenly, looking out. He draws up, also looking off.*]

Gert. A low—bright—line of fire—in the sky! It is a shell. [*A second's pause; she starts slightly.*] It has burst upon the fort. [*Looks over her shoulder at* KERCHIVAL,

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drawing up to her full height.] Now!—do you believe that we Southerners are in deadly earnest?

Ker. We Northerners are in deadly earnest, too. I have received my answer. [*Goes quickly, turns.*] We are —enemies! [*They look at each other for a moment. He goes out.*]

Gert. Kerchival! [*Moving quickly half across the room, looking after him eagerly; stops.*] Enemies! [*She drops into chair, sobbing bitterly. There is another distant report, followed by low, long reverberations.*]

Three years later the Ellingham homestead in the Shenandoah valley is the centre of obstinate conflicts. From the front of the house Three Top Mountain is seen in the distance. Gertrude and her friend, Madeline West, who has come to pay her a visit, are watching the approach of a regiment of Union cavalry. The Federal lines are only three miles away, and the Confederate troops are at a short distance beyond them.

An old countryman approaches, leaning on a cane. He stops at the gateway, places a letter under the capstone of a post, and then hobbles off. Gertrude gets the letter. It is in her brother's handwriting. They had not heard from him since the battle of Winchester, a month before. The envelope incloses a dispatch and a letter to Gertrude from Mrs. Haverill.

The dispatch is addressed to Captain Edward Thornton, and is to be forwarded to him at the bend in Oak Run. Gertrude decides that she must take the dispatch to Captain Thornton herself.

Mrs. Haverill writes that Kerchival West has been to see her in Washington, and has left for the Shenandoah Valley where he is going to serve under General Sheridan. She is certain that he still loves Gertrude. Gertrude kisses the letter and remarks aloud that it is quite immaterial to her whether Kerchival West still loves her or not. Mrs. Haverill goes on to say that she was sorely tempted to tell the young officer of Gertrude's confession to her, that she loved him with her whole heart.

Jennie Buckthorn runs out from the house to tell Gertrude and Madeline that it is Colonel Kerchival West's regiment that is approaching. She has been watching

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them with field glasses. What delights Jennie particularly is that Captain Hartsease is in command of the first troop, though he really deserves a court-martial for stealing her lace handkerchief. Various bugle calls ring out, and the first horsemen arrive at the house and dismount.

Captain Hartsease comes to the gate followed by Robert Ellingham, who was captured that morning by the Federals and is on parole. Captain Hartsease takes a lace handkerchief from his pocket.

Heartsease. Miss Buckthorn, I owe you an apology. After I left your side, the last time we met, I found your handkerchief in my possession. I assure you, it was an accident.

Jennie [*aside, pouting*]. I thought he intended to steal it. [*Aloud.*] That was more than a year ago. [*Then brightly.*] Do you always carry it with you?

Hart. Always; there. [*Indicating his left breast pocket.*]

Jen. Next to his heart!

Hart. Shall I return it to you?

Jen. Oh, if a lace handkerchief can be of any use to you, Captain, during the hardships of a campaign—you—you may keep that one. You soldiers have so few comforts—and it's real lace.

Hart. Thank you. [*Returning handkerchief to his pocket.*] Miss Buckthorn, your papa is in command of the Nineteenth Army Corps. He doesn't like me.

Jen. I know it.

Hart. But you are in command of him.

Jen. Yes; I always have been.

Hart. If ever you decide to assume command of any other man, I—I trust you will give me your orders.

Jen. [*aside, starting back*]. If that was intended for a proposal, it's the queerest-shaped one I ever heard of. [*Aloud.*] Do you mean, Captain, that—that you—I must command myself now. [*Shouldering her parasol.*] 'Bout—face! March! [*Turning squarely around, marching up on veranda.*]

Hart. I have been placed on waiting orders.

Kerchival is talking with a young lieutenant who goes under the name of Bedloe. He is really the son of General Haverill, and now supposed to have been killed a year earlier. Kerchival has received a letter from Mrs.

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Haverill, informing him of these facts. He gives the letter to Frank, who, in opening it, lets fall the envelope on a rustic table near which he is standing.

A moment later General Haverill enters the gate accompanied by a staff officer. His eyes fall upon his son, whom he believes to be dead, and he gives a start. He asks the young man his name and looks into his face. He stands in thought a moment, covering his face with one hand. Then he turns to Colonel West and informs him that a young officer is needed to undertake a hazardous piece of work.

Frank at once asks for the assignment and his father accepts him. It is necessary to obtain the key to cipher dispatches which the enemy are sending from Three Top Mountain. The lieutenant's duty will be to get inside the enemy's lines with a number of picked men and make a sudden attack on a Confederate signal station in the valley with the object of securing a copy of the cipher code. The general says it is dangerous work, and asks his son if he has a father living.

Kerchival interjects that he has the address of the lieutenant's friends. Captain Hartsease asks permission to accompany the expedition. General Haverill grants it, and impresses upon him the important nature of the mission. General Sheridan is absent in Washington, and they have reason to believe the enemy are about to move.

As he is speaking he picks up an envelope lying on the table and taps with it on the boards. When he has finished he looks at the envelope and sees Kerchival's name in his wife's handwriting. He stops Kerchival and tells him that he found a paragraph in a Richmond newspaper, taken from a prisoner, that he wants to read him. The paragraph runs as follows:

"From the Charleston *Mercury*. Captain Edward Thornton, of the Confederate Secret Service, has been assigned to duty in the Shenandoah Valley. Our gallant Captain still bears upon his face the mark of his meeting, in 1861, with Lieut., now Col. Kerchival West, who is also to serve in the valley, with Sheridan's army. Another meeting between these two men would be one of the strange coincidences of the war, as they were at one time,

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if not indeed at present, interested in the same beautiful woman."

Haverill. I will ask you to read the last few lines yourself. [*Hands* KERCHIVAL *the slip.*]

Ker. [*reading*]. "The scandal connected with the lovely wife of a Northern officer, at the opening of the war, was overshadowed, of course, by the attack on Fort Sumter; but many Charlestonians will remember it. The lady in defence of whose good name Captain Thornton fought the duel—he defending her good name!—is the wife of General Haverill, who will be Colonel West's immediate commander." [*He pauses a moment, then hands back the slip.*] General! I struck Mr. Thornton after a personal quarrel.

Hav. And the cause of the blow? There is much more in this than I have ever known of. I need hardly say that I do not accept the statement of this scandalous paragraph as correct. I will ask you to tell me the whole story, frankly, as man to man.

Ker. [*after a moment's thought*]. I will tell you—all—frankly, General.

The capture of a prisoner is reported to Captain West. General Haverill, saying they will meet again that night, leaves him. The prisoner is a woman who was seen talking to a Confederate officer at Oak Run, and it is thought that either the officer gave her a dispatch or she gave him one. The officer escaped, though he is still being pursued. The sergeant in charge of the woman prisoner explains that being a bachelor, and accordingly unacquainted with the geography of the fair sex, he is in terror lest he be ordered to undertake an exploring expedition. The prisoner is brought forward. She is Gertrude Ellingham.

Ker. Ah! Very well, Corporal, you can go. [*Rising; he motions the guard to retire.*] Be seated, Madam. [GERTRUDE *draws up, folding her arms and planting her foot spitefully.* KERCHIVAL *shrugs his shoulders. Aside.*] I wish they'd capture a tigress for me, or some other female animal that I know how to manage better than I do a woman. [*Aloud.*] I am very sorry, Madam; but of course my duty as a military officer is paramount to all other considerations. You have been captured within the lines of

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this army, and under circumstances which lead me to think that you have important dispatches upon your person. I trust that you will give me whatever you have, at once. I shall be exceedingly sorry if you compel me to adopt the extreme—and the very disagreeable course—for both of us—of having you—I—I hesitate even to use the word, Madam—but military law is absolute—having you——

Gert. Searched! If you dare, Colonel West! [*Turning to him suddenly and drawing up to her full height.*]

Ker. Gertrude Ellingham! [*Springs across to her, with his arms extended.*] My dear Gertrude!

Gert. [*turning her back upon him*]. Not "dear Gertrude" to you, sir!

Ker. Not?—Oh! I forgot.

Gert. [*coldly*]. I am your prisoner.

Ker. Yes. [*Drawing up firmly with a change of manner.*] We will return to the painful realities of war. I am very sorry that you have placed yourself in a position like this, and, believe me, Gertrude—[*with growing tenderness*] —I am still more sorry to be in such a position myself. [*Rests one hand on her arm, and his other about her waist.*]

Gert. [*after looking down at his hands*]. You don't like the position? [*He starts back, drawing up with dignity.*] Is that the paramount duty of a military officer?

Ker. You will please hand me whatever dispatches or other papers may be in your possession.

Gert. [*looking away*]. You will force me, I suppose. I am a woman; you have the power. Order in the guard! A corporal and two men—you'd better make it a dozen—I am dangerous. Call the whole regiment to arms! Beat the long roll! I won't give up if all the armies of the United States surround me.

General Buckthorne, passing with his staff, stops upon learning that a woman has been captured who is suspected of having dispatches which she was taking to the enemy. Gertrude denies that she has any dispatches, and says she would not give them to the general if she had.

Buckthorne. What! You defy my authority? Colonel West, I command you! Search the prisoner! [GERTRUDE *turns suddenly toward* KERCHIVAL, *facing him defiantly. He looks at her aghast. A moment's pause.*]

Ker. General Buckthorne—I decline to obey that order.

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Buck. You—you decline to obey my order! [*Moves down to him fiercely.*]

Ker. [*apart*]. General! It is the woman I love.

Buck. [*apart*]. Is it? Damn you, sir! I wouldn't have an officer in my army corps who would obey me under such circumstances. I'll have to look for those dispatches myself.

Ker. [*facing him, angrily*]. If you dare, General Buckthorne!

Buck. [*apart*]. Blast your eyes! I'd kick you out of the army if you'd let me search her, but it's my military duty to swear at you. [*To* GERTRUDE.] Colonel West has sacrificed his life to protect you.

Gert. His life!

Buck. I shall have him shot for insubordination to his commander immediately. [*Gives* KERCHIVAL *a huge wink, and turns away.*]

Gert. Oh, sir! General! I have told you the truth: I have no dispatches. Believe me, sir, I haven't so much as a piece of paper about me, except——

Buck. Except? [*Turning sharply.*]

Gert. Only a letter. Here it is. [*Taking letter from the bosom of her dress.*] Upon my soul, it is all I have. Truly, it is.

Upon perceiving that the letter contains evidence of the young lady's love for Colonel West, General Buckthorne declares that it is a very important military document, and he gives it to West with instructions not to look at it unless the prisoner, who is apparently very dangerous, disobeys him or attempts to escape.

Meanwhile, the Confederate officer who was pursued at Oak Run after the capture of the young lady has also been caught and proves to be Edward Thornton. A paper found on him is given to General Buckthorne, and a miniature portrait of Mrs. Haverill, also in his breast pocket, comes to Kerchival. Thornton springs at Kerchival, but the guard seize him and take him away. It is now growing dark, and General Buckthorne lights matches to read the dispatch taken from Thornton, which says that orders relating to the movements of the Confederates will be signalled from Three Top Mountain that night.

Gertrude runs up to Kerchival in great excitement to

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tell him that two troopers are passing with her pet horse Jack, which was captured at the battle of Fair Oaks. Kerchival's promise to restore the horse to her if he can wins such gratitude that she is apparently on the point of confessing her love when a trooper leads up the handsome black horse and she throws her arms around the animal's neck instead of her lover's. As the trooper says the horse belongs to General Sheridan Kerchival cannot take it, and Gertrude reminds him that he is her enemy.

Meanwhile, Edward Thornton has escaped from the guard, wounding two of them with a knife, and is supposed to be in hiding inside the lines. Just as this is reported to Kerchival a signal light appears on Three Top Mountain, and almost simultaneously word is brought that Lieutenant Bedloe has succeeded in his attempt to capture the signal code of the Confederates, but that he has been seriously wounded. It is said also that Captain Hartsease was shot dead.

The captured code makes it possible to read the signals flashed from the mountain top, which announce the advance of General Longstreet with eighteen thousand men, and the fact of General Sheridan's absence which will make it possible to crush the Union Army. When the signalling is finished General Haverill sees Robert Ellingham and another man supporting Kerchival West, who has apparently been wounded.

Ellingham. Steady, Kerchival, old boy! You should have let us carry you.

Ker. Nonsense, old fellow! It's a mere touch with the point of the knife. I—I'm faint—with the loss of a little blood—that's all. Bob!—I—— [*Reels suddenly and is caught by* ELLINGHAM *as he sinks to the ground, insensible.*]

Ell. Kerchival! [*Kneeling at his side.*]

Hav. Go for the Surgeon! [*To staff officer, who goes out quickly on veranda.*] How did this happen? [*Enter* CORPORAL DUNN *and guard with* THORNTON. *He is in his shirt sleeves and dishevelled, his arms folded. They march down.*] Captain Thornton!

Ell. We were leaving the house together; a hunted animal sprang suddenly across our path, like a panther. [*Looking over his shoulder.*] There it stands. Kerchival! My brother!

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Corporal Dunn. We have just brought this prisoner to bay, but I'm afraid we were too late.

Hav. This is assassination, sir, not war. If you have killed him——

Thorn. Do what you like with me; we need waste no words. I had an old account to settle, and I have paid my debt.

Ell. General Haverhill! I took these from his breast when he first fell. [*Handing up wallet and miniature to* HAVERILL. HAVERILL *starts as he looks at the miniature.* THORNTON *watches him.*]

Hav. [*aside*]. My wife's portrait!

Thorn. If I have killed him—your honor will be buried in the same grave.

Hav. Her picture on his breast! She gave it to him—not to my son!

Dropping into seat. Captain Lockwood enters with a signalman, who has a burning torch on a long pole; he hurries up the elevation. Captain Lockwood stands below, facing him. Almost simultaneously with the entrance of the signalman, Gertrude runs in on veranda.

Gert. They are calling for a surgeon! Who is it? Brother! you are safe? Ah! [*Uttering a scream, as she sees* KERCHIVAL, *and falling on her knees at his side.*] Kerchival! Forget those last bitter words I said to you. Can't you hear my confession? I do love you. Can't you hear me? I love you! [*The signalman is swinging the torch as the curtain descends.*]

Sunshine flecks the ground next day and bathes the distant valley and mountains. Jennie Buckthorne is standing on a low stone post watching a regiment of cavalry going to the front. Bugle calls ring out. A military band is playing "The Battle Cry of Freedom," and the soldiers marching by sing the chorus.

General Buckthorne comes in, talking with Sergeant Barket, who says that West will be laid up for a month or more with his wound. The general also learns from the sergeant that his daughter was in love with Captain Hartsease. Jennie comes forward to meet her father.

Jen. Oh, papa! I'm so glad you've come. I've got something to say to you. [*Running down and jumping*

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into his arms, kissing him. He turns with her, and sets her down, squarely on her feet and straight before him.]

Buck. And I've got something to say to you—about Captain Hartsease.

Jen. Oh! That's just what I wanted to talk about.

Buck. Fall in! Front face! [*She jumps into military position, turning toward him.*] What's this I hear from Sergeant Barket? He says you've been falling in love.

Jen. I have. [*Saluting.*]

Buck. Young woman! Listen to my orders. Fall out! [*Turns sharply and marches to* HAVERILL.] Order the Third Brigade of Cavalry, under Colonel Lowell, to occupy the left of the pike.

Jen. Papa! [*Running to him and seizing the tail of his coat.*] Papa, dear!

Buck. Close in Colonel Powell on the extreme left—[*slapping his coat-tails out of* JENNIE'S *hands without looking around*]—and hold Custer on the second line, at Old Forge Road. That is all at present. [*Turns to* JENNIE.] Good-bye, my darling! [*Kisses her.*] Remember your orders! You little pet! [*Chuckling, as he taps her chin; draws up suddenly; turns to* HAVERILL.] General, I bid you good-day.

Hav. Good-day, General Buckthorn. [*They salute with great dignity.* BUCKTHORNE *starts off;* JENNIE *springs after him, seizing his coat-tails.*]

Jen. But I want to talk with you, papa; I can't fall out. I—I haven't finished yet. [*Etc., clinging to his coat, as* BUCKTHORNE *marches out rapidly in road, holding back with all her might.*]

General Haverill is convinced at last that his wife and Kerchival have both been false to him, as he believes that his wife begged the miniature from him to give it to Kerchival instead of to Frank.

Gertrude runs out on the veranda.

Gert. General Haverill! [*Anxiously, coming down.*] Colonel West persists in disobeying the injunctions of the surgeon. He is preparing to join his regiment at the front. Give him your orders to remain here. Compel him to be prudent!

Hav. [*quickly*]. The honor of death at the front is not in reserve for him.

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Gert. Eh? What did you say, General?

Hav. Gertrude! I wish to speak to you, as your father's old friend; and I was once your guardian. Your father was my senior officer in the Mexican War. Without his care I should have been left dead in a foreign land. He, himself, afterward fell fighting for the old flag.

Gert. The old flag. [*Aside.*] My father died for it, and he—[*looking left*]—is suffering for it—the old flag!

Hav. I can now return the kindness your father did to me by protecting his daughter from something that may be worse than death.

Gert. What do you mean?

Hav. Last night I saw you kneeling at the side of Kerchival West; you spoke to him with all the tender passion of a Southern woman. You said you loved him. But you spoke into ears that could not hear you. Has he ever heard those words from your lips? Have you ever confessed your love to him before?

Gert. Never. Why do you ask?

Hav. Do not repeat those words. Keep your heart to yourself, my girl.

Gert. General! Why do you say this to me? And at such a moment—when his life——

Hav. His life! [*Turning sharply.*] It belongs to me!

Gert. Oh!

Ker. Sergeant! [*Without. He steps in on road, looking back.*] See that my horse is ready at once. General! [*Saluting.*] Are there any orders for my regiment beyond those given to Major Wilson, in my absence, this morning? I am about to ride on after the troops and reassume my command.

Hav. [*quietly*]. It is my wish, Colonel, that you remain here under the care of the surgeon.

Ker. My wound is a mere trifle. This may be a critical moment in the campaign, and I cannot rest here. I must be with my own men.

Hav. [*quietly*]. I beg to repeat the wish I have already expressed. [KERCHIVAL *walks to him, and speaks apart, almost under his breath, but very earnest in tone.*]

Ker. I have had no opportunity yet to explain certain matters, as you requested me to do yesterday; but whatever there may be between us you are now interfering

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with my duty and my privilege as a soldier; and it is my right to be at the head of my regiment.

Hav. [*quietly*]. It is my positive order that you do not reassume your command.

Ker. General Haverill, I protest against this——

Hav. [*quietly*]. You are under arrest, sir.

Ker. Arrest!

Gert. Ah! [KERCHIVAL *unclasps his belt and offers his sword to* HAVERILL.]

Hav. [*quietly*]. Keep your sword; I have no desire to humiliate you; but hold yourself subject to further orders from me. [KERCHIVAL *moves away and goes up veranda.*]

Ker. My regiment at the front!—and I under arrest! [*Exit.*

Hav. Gertrude! If your heart refuses to be silent—if you feel that you must confess your love to that man—first tell him what I have said to you, and refer him to me for an explanation.

Ellingham has been exchanged for Lieutenant Bedloe, who was captured by the Confederates and is now brought in on a stretcher, dying. Madeline takes down a letter to Frank's wife in which he says that his stepmother took his own mother's place, and that having his father's portrait of her made him a better man. The portrait was taken from him, he says, while he was a prisoner in Richmond and is in the possession of Captain Thornton of the Confederate Secret Service.

A little later, when General Haverill comes in, he looks at the face of the dead boy without recognizing him.

The firing of artillery begins in the distance and the reverberations roll heavily around the hills. Madeline prays for Robert Ellingham, saying that his people are her people, and asking Heaven to forgive her if she is wrong.

Ker. My poor girl! Every woman's heart, the world over, belongs not to any country or any flag, but to her husband—and her lover. Pray for the man you love, sister—it would be treason not to. [*Looks across to* GERTRUDE.] Am I right? [GERTRUDE *drops her head.* MADELINE *moves up veranda.*] Is what I have said to Madeline true?

Gert. Yes! [*Looks up.*] Kerchival!

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Ker. Gertrude! [*Hurries across to her, clasps her in his arms. He suddenly staggers and brings his hand to his breast.*]

Gert. Your wound! [*Supporting him as he reels and sinks into seat.*]

Ker. Wound! I have no wound! You do love me! [*Seizing her hand.*]

Gert. Let me call the surgeon, Kerchival.

Ker. You can be of more service to me than he can. [*Detaining her. Very heavy sounds of the battle; she starts, listening.*] Never mind that! It's only a battle. You love me!

Gert. Be quiet, Kerchival, dear. I do love you. I told you so, when you lay bleeding here, last night. But you could not hear me. [*At his side, resting her arm about him, stroking his head.*] I said that same thing to—to—another, more than three years ago. It is in that letter that General Buckthorn gave you. [*He starts.*] No—no—you must be very quiet, or I will not say another word. If you obey me, I will repeat that part of the letter, every word; I know it by heart, for I read it a dozen times. The letter is from Mrs. Haverill.

Ker. [*quietly*]. Go on.

Gert. "I have kept your secret, my darling, but I was sorely tempted to betray the confidence you reposed in me at Charleston. If Kerchival West—[*she retires backward from him as she proceeds*]—had heard you say, as I did, when your face was hidden in my bosom, that night, that you loved him with your whole heart——"

Ker. Ah! [*Starting to his feet. He sinks back. She springs to support him.*]

Gert. I will go for help.

Ker. Do not leave me at such a moment as this. You have brought me a new life. [*Bringing her to her knees before him and looking down at her.*] Heaven is just opening before me. [*His hands drop suddenly and his head falls back. Battle.*]

Gert. Ah! Kerchival! You are dying! [*Musketry. A sudden sharp burst of musketry, mingled with the roar of artillery near by.* KERCHIVAL *starts, seizing* GERTRUDE'S *arm and holding her away, still on her knees. He looks eagerly toward the left.*]

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Ker. The enemy is close upon us!

[BARKET *runs in, up the slope.*]

Barket. Colonel Wist! The devils have sprung out of the ground. They're pouring over our lift flank like Noah's own flood. The Union Army has started back for Winchester, on its way to the North Pole; our own regiment, Colonel, is coming over the hill in full retrate.

Ker. My own regiment! [*Starting up.*] Get my horse, Barket. [*Turns.*] Gertrude, my life! [*Embraces* GERTRUDE.]

Bar. Your horse, is it? I'm wid ye! There's a row at Finnegan's ball, and we're in it. [*Springs to road and out.*]

Ker. [*turns away. Stops*]. I am under arrest. [*Retreat. Fugitives begin to straggle across stage.*]

Gert. You must not go, Kerchival; it will kill you.

Ker. Arrest be damned! [*Starts up, raises his arms above his head with clenched fist.*] Stand out of my way, you cowards! [*They cower away from him as he rushes out among them. The stream of fugitives passing across stage swells in volume.* GERTRUDE *runs through them and up to the elevation, turning.*]

Gert. Men! Are you soldiers? Turn back! There is a leader for you! Turn back! Fight for your flag—and mine!—the flag my father died for! Turn back! [*She looks out left and turns front.*] He has been marked for death already, and I—I can only pray. [*Dropping to her knees.*]

The stream of fugitives continues, now over the elevation also. The men have rough and torn uniforms, bandaged arms and legs; some are limping and supported by others, some drag their muskets after them, others without muskets, others using them as crutches. There is every variety of uniform, cavalry, infantry, etc.; flags are draggled on the ground. The rattle of musketry is near, and roar of cannon continues; two or three wounded fugitives drop down beside the hedge. Benson staggers in and drops upon rock. Artillerists, rough, torn, and wounded, drag and force a field-piece across. Corporal Dunn, wounded, staggers to the top of elevation. There is a lull in the sounds of the battle. Distant cheers are heard without.

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Dunn. Listen, fellows! Stop! Listen! Sheridan! General Sheridan is coming!

There are cheers from those on the lawn. Gertrude rises quickly. The wounded soldiers rise, looking over hedge. All stop, looking left eagerly. The cheers without come nearer, with shouts of "Sheridan! Sheridan!" The horse is down; he is worn out.

Gert. No! He is up again! He is on my Jack! Now, for your life, Jack, and for me! You've never failed me yet.

The cheers without now swell to full volume and are taken up by those on the stage. The horse sweeps by with General Sheridan.

Gert. Jack! Jack!! Jack!!

She throws up her arms and falls backward, caught by Dunn. The stream of men is reversed and surges back in road and on elevation, with shouts, throwing up hats, etc. The field-piece is forced up the slope with a few bold, rough movements; the artillerists are loading it, and the stream of returning fugitives is still surging by in the road as the curtain falls.

Fife and drum corps are playing "Johnnie Comes Marching Home" in the streets of Washington. The war is over. Mrs. Haverill is awaiting her husband's return at the home of General Buckthorne. With her is Frank's young widow, Edith. She has not even received Frank's last message. Mrs. Haverill tries to comfort her, but feels as if her own heart were breaking. It had been nearly two years since she had heard from her husband when she received a message asking her to meet him that afternoon.

Robert Ellingham comes to the house to see Madeline. Kerchival has been missing since the battle of Cedar Creek. Gertrude searched the battlefield for him, and then started on the rounds of the Southern prisons. It is a shock of joy to Madeline, upon coming into the room, to see Ellingham alive.

Another among the living is Captain Hartsease. When General Buckthorne hears of this he is impatient to see him, and is somewhat surprised to learn that the captain has been behind the curtains of the bow window with Jennie for more than an hour.

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Hartsease has brought with him Frank's notebook in which Gertrude took down the boy's last message to his wife. Gertrude came across Hartsease in a prison and gave him the notebook to take North, as he was expecting at that time to be exchanged. He was disappointed in this hope but managed later to escape.

One night on the road he came face to face with Captain Thornton. With a startled exclamation, Jennie asks what he did. The captain replies very quietly that he killed him, and he plays a few notes on the piano with a marked want of skill. He used to play the tune on a guitar for his fellow prisoners to dance to, but only the lame ones could keep the time.

The message which Mrs. Haverill has received from her husband is that he has been silent because he could not bring his hand to write what was in his mind and heart. He does not know that he can trust his tongue to speak it. At last they meet. He comes forward from the hall with her name on his lips.

Hav. Constance!

Mrs. H. My husband! May I call you husband? After all these months of separation, with your life in almost daily peril, and my life—what? Only a weary longing for one loving word—and you are silent.

Hav. May I call you wife? I do not wish to speak that word except with reverence. You have asked me to come to you. I am here. I will be plain, direct, and brief. Where is the portrait of yourself, which I gave you, in Charleston, for my son?

Mrs. H. Your son is dead, sir; and my portrait lies upon his breast, in the grave. [*He takes the miniature from his pocket and holds it toward her. She starts back.*] He gave it to you? And you ask me where it is?

Hav. It might have lain in the grave of Kerchival West!

Now, he says, she knows why he has been silent so long. Because he found the portrait, not on his son's breast, but on West's. She replies that her witnesses to the truth are dead, and even if he should take her unsupported word, if she could so far forget her pride as to give it to him, suspicion would still hang between them. She says they are parted forever. He declares now that he

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cannot look into her eyes and not see truth and loyalty there, but she will not accept his blind faith.

Edith comes in. From her the general hears for the first time that Lieutenant Bedloe was his son.

Hav. My son! [*He sinks upon a chair.*] I left him alone in his grave, unknown; but my tears fell for him then, as they do now. He died before I reached him.

Edith. Father! [*Laying her hand gently on his shoulder.*] You shall see Frank's face again. His little son is lying asleep upstairs; and when he wakes up Frank's own eyes will look into yours. I have just received his last message. I will read it to you. [*She reads from the notebook.*] "Tell our little son how his father died, not how he lived. And tell her who filled my own mother's place so lovingly. [*She looks at* MRS. HAVERILL, *moves to her and hides her face in her bosom.*] My mother!

Mrs. H. Edith—my child! Frank loved us both.

Edith [*reading*]. "Father's portrait of her, which she gave to me in Charleston—[HAVERILL *starts*]—helped me to be a better man."

Hav. [*rising to his feet*]. Constance!

Edith [*reading*]. "It was taken from me in Richmond, and it is in the possession of Captain Edward Thornton."

General Haverill bows his head, deeply moved, as he takes his wife's hands. General Buckthorne, Captain Hartsease, and Sergeant Barket come in. The Irish sergeant is retelling for the hundredth time his story of the battle of Cedar Creek.

Bark. Just as the rigiment was rayformed in line, and Colonel Wist was out in front—widout any coat or hat, and wid only a shtick in his hand—we heard cheers in the rear. Gineral Sheridan was coming! One word to the men—and we swept over the battery like a whirlwind! [*Slashing his cane through the cups and saucers.*]

Old Margery. Hoo—roo!

Bark. The attack on the left flank was checked. But when we shtopped to take breath, Colonel Wist wasn't wid us. [GERTRUDE *and* KERCHIVAL *have come into the back of the room.*] Heaven knows where he is now. Afther the battle was over poor Miss Gertrude wint off by herself into the wilderness to find him.

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Ker. My wife! You saved my life, at last! [*Embracing her.*]

Bark. They'll never come together in this world. I saw Miss Gertrude myself ride away into the woods and disappear behind a schoolhouse on the battlefield, over there.

Ger. No, Barket—[*all start and look*]—it was the little church; we were married there this morning!

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SECRET SERVICE*

By William Gillette

First played in New York at the Garrick Theatre on October 5, 1896.

Argument: Edith Varney, through her influence as the daughter of a Confederate general, has obtained an order placing the military telegraph lines in Richmond in charge of her lover, Captain Thorne, who, unsuspected by her, is an agent of the United States secret service. At the same time, Benton Arrelsford, an official in the Confederate War Department, and a rejected suitor of Edith, guessing that Thorne is a spy undertakes to convict him by keeping a close watch on him in the telegraph office. The tangled issues comprise Thorne's chances of escape, success of his design to let the northern forces into the city, his struggle between duty and love and his suit for Edith's hand.

The excitement in Richmond, the bustle and confusion, the efforts of the townspeople to care for the wounded pouring in by the carload, and the distant booming of heavy guns, tell that the northern forces are endeavoring by all possible means to break down the defences and capture the Confederate capital. In the home of General Varney, where his eldest son lies stricken with a dangerous wound, the women and neighbors are working day and night to prepare bandages for the hospitals and to sew sand bags for the strengthening of the fortifications.

Edith Varney has been to President Davis on a private mission and obtained from him an appointment for Captain Thorne as head of the War Department telegraph service in order to keep him from being sent back to the

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front before he has completely recovered from the effects of a wound. Her mother does not approve of her action, but Edith explains that she could not have gone to the War Department because Mr. Arrelsford there, whom she has rejected as a suitor, would make every effort to defeat her plan and is the one, in fact, who is responsible for an order sending Captain Thorne back to the front. When the captain calls he refuses to discuss with Edith the order that he has received from the War Department.

Edith. You needn't! I know! [THORNE *a sudden apprehensive glance to front. Looks back to her at once.*] They're sending you on some mission where death is almost certain. They'll sacrifice your life because they know you are fearless and will do anything! There's a chance for you to stay here and be just as much use—and I'm going to ask you to do this! It isn't your life alone—there are other lives to think of—that's why I ask you!—It may not sound well—but—you see——

Thorne [*catching her hands passionately*]. Ah, my——[*Suddenly recovering and partly turning away—not, however, releasing her hands.*] No, no! You shan't have this against me, too!

Edith. Against you! Why? Why? What do you mean? Why is it against you?

Thorne [*holding her hands close against him*]. Because I must go—my business is elsewhere—I ought never to have seen you or spoken to you—but I had to come to this house—and you were here—and how could I help it? Oh—I couldn't—for my whole—it's only you in the——[*Stops. Recovers. Releases her hands. Turns blindly R.—Then as if to go L.*] Your mother—I'll say good-bye to her!

Edith [*going quickly in his way*]. No!—You must listen! They need you here in Richmond!—The President told me so himself!—Your orders are to stay! You are given a Special Commission on the War Department Telegraph service, and you——

Thorne [*quickly, decisively, but in subdued voice*]. No! No! I won't take it! I couldn't take it, Miss Varney!

Edith. You'll do that much for me!

Thorne [*holding her hands*]. It's for you that I'll do nothing of the kind! If you ever think of me again remember I refused it!

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Edith goes out to get the commission, and Captain Thorne is about to keep his resolution by departing in her absence when the arrival of Caroline Mitford, who lives across the street, detains him. He agrees to take Miss Varney over to a party at Miss Mitford's on condition that he shall not be expected to stay, and while waiting for Edith to come down he goes out on the balcony to smoke.

Benton Arrelsford suddenly appears with a guard of soldiers whom he stations about the house. He tells Mrs. Varney that one of her servants, old Jonas, has been to Libby Prison under pretence of selling something to the Yankees and has obtained from a prisoner a written communication which he intends to deliver to some secret agent of the Yankees in Richmond.

Arrelsford says that two brothers, Lewis and Henry Dumont, are under Secret Service orders "to do some rascally piece of work in Richmond," and that he has just obtained descriptions of them. They already hold the younger brother, and the man to whom old Jonas gives the slip of paper is the other one they want. They cannot afford to wait long, however, as the paper may contain some important secret, and he decides to make the negro tell what he knows.

The old negro is brought in and is greatly frightened at seeing the soldiers. A paper is found in his pocket. He will say nothing. After threatening to shoot him, Arrelsford sends him out with soldiers whom he tells to string up the old man until he talks. On the paper is written,—

"ATTACK TO-NIGHT—PLAN 3—USE TELEGRAPH"

Arrelsford. He's to use our War Department telegraph lines to send some false order and weaken our position so they can break through and come down on the city.

Mrs. Varney. Oh! [*She is almost breathless with indignation.*] But the one—the man who is to do this—there's nothing about *him!*

Arr. There is something about him!

Mrs. V. What? Where? I don't see it!

Arr. "Use telegraph!" [*The two stand looking at one another.*] We know every man on the telegraph service—

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and every man of them's true! But there's some that want to get into that service that we don't know quite so well.

They speak in low, intense voices. Arrelsford reminds Mrs. Varney that the negro brought the paper to her house, and that for more than a month her daughter has been working to get an appointment for some one in the telegraph service. He suggests that Edith may be able to give them some idea.

Mrs. Varney goes quickly to the portières concealing the French windows that open on the balcony and pulls the curtains close together. Arrelsford asks with a start if he is there. Mrs. Varney nods. She says that he could have heard nothing, as he is at the far end of the balcony.

Mrs. V. [*after a pause, in a low voice*]. You have a description, you say?

Arr. Yes—at the office.

Mrs. V. Then this man—this Captain Thorne——

Arr. [*in a low voice, but with vehemence*]. There *is* no Captain Thorne! This fellow you have in your house is Lewis Dumont!

Edith comes in hurriedly, dressed for the party, and says that they are hurting some one frightfully under her window. She is surprised that her mother does not start to go with her and see what is the matter. Arrelsford tells her that a man whom they have trusted as a friend has shown himself to be a treacherous conspirator against them. It is the gentleman, he says, whose attentions she has been pleased to accept in the place of his. Edith turns white. She puts the President's commission which she had brought down for Thorne in the bosom of her dress. Arrelsford says they know nothing of Thorne and demands to know who he is.

Edith. Who are you?

Arr. That's not the question!

Edith. Neither is it the question who is he! If it were I'd answer it—I'd tell you he's a soldier who has fought and been wounded for his country!

Arr. We're not so sure of that!

Edith [*after a pause of indignation*]. He brought us letters from General Stonewall Jackson and——

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Arr. [*quick and sharp*]. General Jackson was killed before his letter was presented!

Edith. What does that signify if he wrote it?

Arr. Nothing—*if* he wrote it!

Edith. Mr. Arrelsford, if you mean—— [MRS. VARNEY *goes to* EDITH, *putting her hand on* EDITH'S *arm.*]

Mrs. V. [*low voice*]. Listen, Edith! They have proofs of a conspiracy on our Government Telegraph Lines. [ARRELSFORD *says "Sh" and goes to window.* EDITH *turns from* ARRELSFORD *and looks before her, listening on mention of "Telegraph Lines."*] Two men in the Northern Secret Service have been sent here to do this work. One is in Libby Prison. Our old Jonas went there to-day—secretly took a message from him and brought it here—to the other! [EDITH *turns toward* MRS. VARNEY *sharply.*] We've just had Jonas in here and found that paper on him!

[ARRELSFORD *comes forward.*]

Edith [*rapidly, desperately. In low voice*]. But he hasn't said it was for——

[*There is a heavy sound of the front door closing.*]

Arr. Not yet—but he will! [EDITH *looks at* ARRELSFORD, *not comprehending. Enter corporal at door up L., stands on salute.*] Well—what does he say?

Corporal. Nothing, sir—he won't speak!

Arr. What have you done?

Cor. Strung him up three times and——

Arr. [*enraged but keeping his voice down*]. Well, string him up again! If he won't speak shoot it out of him! Kill the dog!

Cor. We don't need the niggah's evidence—there's enough without it!

Edith. There's nothing!

Arr. By twelve o'clock to-night you'll have all the proof you want!

Edith. There's no proof at all!

Arr. I'll show it to you at the telegraph office! Do you dare go with me?

Edith. Dare! I *will* go with you!

Arr. I'll call for you in half an hour!

Edith. Wait! What are you going to do?

Arr. I'm going to let him get this paper! He'll know

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what they want him to do—and then we'll see him try to do it.

Edith insists that Captain Thorne be told of the accusation instantly so that he may clear himself, but Arrelsford replies that that would be only giving him warning. She then tells him to bring from Libby Prison the man who he claims is Thorne's brother, as if he were trying to escape, and let them meet face to face. This, Arrelsford agrees to do.

When Arrelsford and the soldiers have gone Edith tells her mother that she offered Captain Thorne the commission that she got for him and that he refused it, saying that it was on account of her that he could not take it. She tries at first to keep her mother from believing that the charge against Thorne is true, but finally is herself convinced that it is.

An hour later Arrelsford returns to the house with the prisoner and arranges to have him shoved in through the parlor window when Thorne is in the room alone. In the meantime Edith has had a long talk with Thorne on the balcony and he has told her that he loves her. She says to Arrelsford that she cannot carry out what they had planned.

Arr. We must go on!

Edith [*turning desperately upon him*]. Why are you doing this?

Arr. Because I please!

Edith. You never pleased before! Hundreds of suspicious cases have come up—hundreds of men have been caught—but you preferred to sit at your desk in the War Department.

She declares she will have nothing more to do with the affair.

Arr. At your own suggestion, Miss Varney, I agreed to a plan by which we could criminate this friend of yours—or establish his innocence. At the critical moment—when everything's ready you propose to withdraw—making it a failure and perhaps allowing him to escape altogether!

Mrs. V. You mustn't do this, Edith!

Edith. He's there! The man is there—at the farther end of the veranda! What more do you want of me?

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Arr. Call 'im into this room! If any one else should do it he'd suspect! He'd be on his guard!

She consents to call him, and Arrelsford also induces her to give Thorne the paper, saying that if he is innocent no harm will be done, and if he is guilty the message will take him to the telegraph office, which is just where they shall want him. Edith now protests that she believes Thorne is innocent. They hear Thorne coming and leave Edith. He enters from the balcony and comes a few steps into the room, when he stops and stands an instant looking at Edith as she gazes strangely at him. Then he goes to her.

Thorne. Is anything the matter?

Edith [*shakes her head slightly before answering, almost in a whisper*]. Oh, no! [*She stands looking up in his face.*]

Thorne. You've been away such a long time!

Edith. Only a few minutes!

Thorne. Only a few years.

Edith [*easier*]. Oh—if that's a few years—what lots of time there is!

Thorne. No. There's only to-night.

Edith. What!

Thorne [*taking her hands*]. There's only to-night and you in the world!

He says he came determined not to tell her of his love, and that for half an hour he has been doing nothing else. Edith betrays alarm by an instinctive glance toward the door which is not lost on Thorne. He then tells her not to believe what he has said, that he came to make a friendly call and bid her good-bye. He starts toward the door, but she stops him and gives him the piece of paper which was taken from Jonas and asks him if he can explain it.

He looks at the paper as if he recognizes it, but without a start, and slowly reads the inscription. He hazards the guess that it is a puzzle. She tells him it came from a Yankee prisoner. He appears to be interested and suggests that it may be something important. She says that the prisoner gave it to Jonas.

Edith. We took it away from him!

Thorne. Oh! [*Starting at once as if to go to the door.*] That was a mistake!

Edith [*detaining him*]. What are you going to do?

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Thorne. Find that nigger and make him tell who this paper was for—he's the man we want!

Edith [*turning quickly to him*]. Cap'n Thorne—they've lied about you!

Thorne [*wheeling round like a flash—and coming back quickly*]. Lied about me! What do you mean? [*Seizing her hands and looking in her face to read what it is.*]

Edith [*speaking quickly, breathlessly, and almost in a whisper*]. Don't be angry—I didn't think it would be like this!

Thorne. Yes—but what have you done?

They hear voices and heavy footfalls outside. Edith slips out. Thorne draws a revolver and stands ready in case there is to be an attack. A corporal enters with two men. They cross the room and the two men get out of the window. Thorne asks what the matter is, and the corporal says that a prisoner from Libby has run into the street and is hiding somewhere in the neighborhood. The corporal also goes out.

Suddenly the two men who crossed the room with the corporal reappear at the window, holding a man whom they thrust into the room. He is Henry Dumont. Thorne orders him to halt in a loud voice. Knowing that they are being watched, they grapple, and Thorne calls for the corporal. Dumont holds Thorne motionless a moment and hisses in his ear: ATTACK TO-NIGHT—PLAN THREE—TELEGRAPH—DO YOU GET IT? Thorne says he does.

Dumont [*speaking almost in a whisper*]. They're watching us! Shoot me in the leg!

Thorne [*holding him motionless*]. No, no! I can't do that!

Dumont. It's the only way to throw them off the scent.

Thorne. Well, I won't do it anyhow!

Dumont struggles for the revolver and Thorne shouts for the guard.

Thorne. Here's your man, Corporal. What's the matter with you?

Dumont. Give me that gun.

Dumont wrenches Thorne's hand from the revolver and holds it up with his left, while with his right he seizes the weapon and draws it from the holster. He fires and falls, mortally wounded.

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Arrelsford and the soldiers burst in. Mrs. Varney and Edith follow them.

Arr. Where is he? What has he done? He's shot the man!

Thorne [*giving the revolver a careless swing*]. There's your prisoner, Corporal. Look out for him.

The military telegraph office is established in a large bare room in a public building. Windows at the back open on a colonnade and a balcony that communicates with other rooms. Before ten o'clock Arrelsford is on the scene. Edith arrives shortly after. She says that she has not come to oblige him, but to see that no more murders are committed to satisfy his singular curiosity. Henry Dumont is dead.

Men acting for Arrelsford have kept track of Thorne and say that he is on his way to the telegraph office. Arrelsford and Edith go out on the balcony and wait. Presently Thorne enters. He takes charge of the office and finds errands for the operators as well as the messengers. Quickly satisfying himself that there is no one about, he takes a seat at a telegraph key, lays a revolver on the table and gives a call.

As a messenger enters with a dispatch Thorne is lighting a cigar. The message is one which the Secretary of War wishes sent. Thorne tears off the Secretary's signature and pastes it on a dispatch that he has written himself, but he is not so much alone as he believes. Arrelsford and Edith are watching him through the windows. Thorne begins to telegraph rapidly. A slight click that Arrelsford makes accidentally with the window latch startles him and he stops.

Arrelsford and Edith withdraw from the window and there is dead silence. Thorne pushes things about on the table as if looking for something, and then quickly springs up and turns out the gas. He creeps stealthily to the door and locks it, and then to the window which he throws open. Upon looking out he sees no one. Reassured, he lights the gas and once more begins to telegraph.

Suddenly there is a sharp report of a revolver from outside the window. Thorne recoils from the instrument, raising his left hand which is covered with blood, as Arrels-

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ford springs in at the window and covers him with a revolver. Edith also comes forward, but she refuses to remain longer. Arrelsford says he must detain her. He calls for the guard. The door is locked, but the soldiers batter it in with the butts of their rifles and enter the room.

Thorne [*pointing at* ARRELSFORD]. Arrest that man!

The sergeant of the guard and six men spring forward and seize Arrelsford before he can recover from his astonishment, throwing him nearly down but pulling him to his feet again and holding him fast.

Thorne. He's got in here with a revolver and he's playing hell with it!

Arr. Sergeant—my orders are——

Thorne. Damn your orders! You haven't got orders to shoot everybody you see in this office.

The guard disarm Arrelsford and silence him. Thorne tells them to take him out.

Sergeant of the Guard. Much hurt, Cap'n?

Thorne [*carelessly*]. Oh, no. Did up one hand a little—I can get along with the other all right. [*Sits at table and begins telegraphing.*]

Arr. [*struggling desperately*]. Stop him! He's sending a—wait! Ask Miss Varney! She saw him! Ask her! Ask Miss Varney! [*Speaks until stopped. Wildly—losing all control of himself.*]

Sergeant [*breaking in on* ARRELSFORD]. Here! Fall in there. We'll get him out. [*The guard quickly fall in behind* ARRELSFORD, *who is still struggling.*] Forward——

The guard are about to take Arrelsford away when Major-General Harrison Randolph enters the office. Arrelsford has been so astonished and indignant at his treatment that he can't find his voice at first. Thorne goes on telegraphing, the dispatch with the pasted signature spread out before him.

Arr. [*violently*]. General! They've arrested me! A conspiracy! [*Sees* THORNE.] Stop that man—for God's sake stop him before it's too late!

General Randolph. Stop him! What do you mean?

Thorne [*rising quickly*]. He means me, sir. He's got an idea some dispatch I'm sending out is a trick of the Yankees.

Arr. [*excitedly*]. It's a conspiracy. He's an impostor—a—a——

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Thorne. Why the man must have gone crazy, General!

Arr. I came here on a case for——

General R. [*sharply*]. Wait! I'll get at this! [*To sergeant.*] What was he doing?

Sergeant. He was firing on the Cap'n, sir.

Arr. He was sending out a false order to weaken our lines at Cemetery Hill and I—ah——[*Suddenly recollecting.*] Miss Varney! [*Looking excitedly about.*] She was here—she saw it all!

General R. [*gruffly*]. Miss Varney!

Arr. Yes, sir!

General R. The General's daughter?

Arr. Yes, sir!

General R. What was she doing here?

Arr. She came to see for herself whether he was guilty or not!

General R. Is this some personal matter of yours?

Arr. He was a visitor at their house—I wanted her to know!

Arrelsford says that Miss Varney is out on the balcony, but she cannot be found. Thorne turns to the telegraph instrument and begins again to send the dispatch, using his right hand. The General interrupts him, and Arrelsford tries to explain that he has been assigned to a department case in which Thorne is suspected.

Arr. The whole plot—to send the order—it's the Yankee Secret Service! His brother brought in the signal to-night!

[GENERAL RANDOLPH *looks sharply at* ARRELSFORD.]

Thorne [*very quiet, matter-of-fact*]. This ought to go out, sir—it's very important.

General R. Go ahead with it!

Thorne resumes sending rapidly as he stands before the table.

Arr. [*seeing what is going on*]. No, no! It's a——

General R. Silence!

Arr. [*excitedly*]. Do you know what he's telling them?

General R. No! Do you?

Arr. Yes! If you'll——

General R. [*to* THORNE]. Wait! [THORNE *stops telegraphing, coming at once to salute.*] Where's that dispatch? [THORNE *hands him the dispatch.*]

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Arr. [*excitedly*]. He began to give an order to withdraw Marston's Division from its present position!

General R. That is perfectly correct.

Arr. Yes—by that dispatch—but that dispatch is a forgery! [THORNE *with a look of surprise turns sharply toward* ARRELSFORD.] It's an order to withdraw a whole division from a vital point! A false order! He wrote it himself! [THORNE *stands as if astounded.*]

General R. Why should he write it? If he wanted to send out a false order he could do it without setting it down on paper, couldn't he?

Arr. Yes—but if any of the operators came back they'd catch him doing it! With that order and the Secretary's signature he could go right on! He could even order one of them to send it!

Arrelsford says that Thorne tore the signature from a genuine dispatch, but Thorne instantly replies that if the General has any doubts he can send the dispatch back to the War Office and have it verified. General Randolph says he will do so. The telegraph instrument clicks. The rest of the message is wanted at the front. The General directs Thorne to let them have it. Thorne begins sending. Arrelsford attempts to interfere, but the General silences him and says he will be examined at headquarters.

At this moment an operator enters whom, Arrelsford declares, Thorne sent away on a forged order. Again the General stops Thorne. There is an instant of dead silence.

General R. [*to operator*]. Where did you come from?

Operator [*not withstanding what is going on. Salutes*]. There was some mistake, sir!

General R. Mistake, eh? Who made it?

Operator. I got an order to go to the President's house, and when I got there the President——

Thorne [*rising at telegraph table*]. This delay will be disastrous, sir! Permit me to go on—if there's any mistake we can rectify it afterward! [*Turns to instrument and begins sending as he stands before it.*]

Arr. No!

General R. [*who has not given heed to* THORNE'S *speech —to operator*]. Where did you get the order?

Arr. He's at it again, sir!

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General R. [*suddenly sees what* THORNE *is doing*]. Halt! [THORNE *stops telegraphing.*] What are you doing? I ordered you to wait!

Thorne. I was sent here to attend to the business of this office and that business is going on!

General R. [*his temper rising*]. It's not going on, sir, until I'm ready for it!

Thorne [*turning back to the general. Loud voice, angrily*]. My orders come from the War Department—not from you! This dispatch came in half an hour ago—they're calling for it—and it's my business to send it out! [*Seizing the key, endeavors to rush off the dispatch.*]

General R. Halt! [THORNE *goes on telegraphing. To Sergeant of the Guard.*] Sergeant! [*Sergeant salutes.*] Hold that machine there!

Sergeant of the Guard and two men spring quickly across to Thorne, forcing him away from table. The two men cross bayonets over instrument and stand motionless.

General R. [*to* THORNE]. I'll have you court-martialed for this!

Thorne [*breaking loose from sergeant*]. You'll answer yourself, sir, for delaying a dispatch of vital importance!

General R. [*sharply*]. Do you mean that?

Thorne. I mean that! And I demand that you let me proceed with the business of this office!

General R. By what authority do you send that dispatch?

Thorne. I refer you to the Department!

General R. Show me your order for taking charge of this office!

Thorne tells him to inquire at the Department. The General says he will. He is about to send men to the War Office when Miss Varney enters at the window. General Randolph questions her and she says that Captain Thorne is acting on the highest authority, at the same time handing him the commission signed by President Davis.

General R. [*looking at the commission*]. What's this! Major's Commission! Assigned to duty on the Signal Corps! In command of the Telegraph Department!

Arr. [*breaking out*]. That commission—let me explain how she——

General R. That'll do! I suppose this is a forgery, too?

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Arr. Let me tell you, sir——

General R. You've told me enough! Sergeant—take him to headquarters!

Sergeant [*quick salute*]. Fall in there! [*Motioning men at instrument. Men at instrument hurry across and fall into rank.*] Forward march!

[*Sergeant and guard quickly rush* ARRELSFORD *across to door and off.*]

Arr. [*resisting and protesting as he is forced across and off at R.*]. No! For God's sake, General, listen to me! It's the Yankee Secret Service! Never mind me, but don't let that dispatch go out! He's a damned Yankee Secret Agent! His brother brought in the signal to-night!

The sound of Arrelsford's voice and the footsteps of the guard die away down the corridor. General Randolph goes, and when Thorne is at last free to send the remainder of the message Miss Varney returns and comes quickly forward.

Edith [*speaking low and hurriedly*]. Cap'n Thorne! [*He stops telegraphing.*] That gives you authority—long enough to escape from Richmond.

Thorne. Escape? Impossible! [*Seizes key and begins to send.*]

Edith. Oh! You wouldn't do it now! [*He stops and looks at her.*] I brought it to save your life! I didn't think you'd use it for anything else! Oh—you wouldn't!

The key clicks. Thorne turns toward it. Edith covers her face with a low cry of dispair, at the same time turning away, leaves the office and Thorne goes through a desperate struggle with himself, almost seizes the key, and then, striking the table with his fist, strides away, the commission crumpled in his right hand.

Operator. They're calling for that dispatch, sir. What shall I do?

Thorne. Send it!

Thorne stands motionless an instant while the operator sends.

Thorne. No, no—stop! [*He seizes the dispatch.*] It won't do! It won't do! Revoke the order! It was a mistake! I refuse to act under this commission. [*He throws the papers on the floor.*]

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Late at night it becomes evident in the city from the redoubled thunder of cannon and the increasing frequency of musketry volleys that a heavy attack is developing against the fortifications. An alarm bell is ringing to call out the reserves, while artillery and troops are rushed forward through the streets. From the windows of the Varneys' home the flashes of the artillery are plainly seen against the sky.

Arrelsford calls upon Mrs. Varney and demands to see her daughter. He has a few questions to ask. He tells her to listen to the bombardment, which he says is revealing the meaning of the message, "Attack to-night. Plan three."

Mrs. V. Is that—the attack?

Arr. That's the attack, Madam! They're breaking through our lines at Cemetery Hill! That was PLAN THREE! We're rushing over the reserves, but they may not get there in time!

Mrs. V. What has my daughter to do with this?

Arr. Do with it! She did it!

Mrs. V. [*astonished*]. What!

Arr. We had him in his own trap—under arrest—the telegraph under guard—when she brought in that commission!

Mrs. V. [*horrified*]. You don't mean she——

Arr. Yes—that's it! She put the game in his hands. He got the wires! His cursed dispatch went through. As soon as I got to headquarters they saw the trick! They rushed the guard back—the scoundrel had got away! But we're after him hot, an' if she knows where he is—— [*About to turn to and go toward door up L.*] I'll get it out of her!

It is some time later, when a hue and cry are raised outside, that Thorne, pursued through the street, climbs up over the balcony and enters the Varneys' parlor. He is desperate, hatless and coatless, his shirt and trousers torn and soiled, and his left hand roughly bandaged. The noise made by his pursuers fades away. He starts forward to cross the room.

Suddenly a voice says, "Halt! You are my prisoner." He sees a revolver held in his face by Wilfred Varney, who has come home wounded and was lying on the sofa,

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Thorne tells Wilfred he may shoot him if he likes, but begs him to let him have one look at his dead brother whom he has come to see. Wilfred goes out the window to call the posse of the guard. Edith comes in at that moment and Thorne repeats his entreaty to her. The posse are again heard outside.

Thorne [*a flash of distant artillery lighting his face as he turns toward the window*]. Ha, ha—they're on the scent, you see! They'll get me in a minute—an' when they do it won't take long to finish me off! [*Looks at her.*] And as that'll be the last of me—[*moves toward her*]—as that'll be the last of me, Miss Varney—maybe you'll listen to one thing! We can't all die a soldier's death—in the roar and glory of battle—our friends around us—under the flag we love!—no—not all! Some of us have orders for another kind of work—desperate—dare-devil work—the hazardous schemes of the Secret Service! We fight our battles alone—no comrades to cheer us on—ten thousand to one against us—death at every turn! If we win we escape with our lives—if we lose—dragged out and butchered like dogs—no soldier's grave—not even a trench with the rest of the boys—alone—despised—forgotten! These were my orders, Miss Varney—this is the death I die tonight—and I don't want you to think for one minute that I'm ashamed of it—not for one minute!

Shouts are heard under the window. Thorne waits indifferently. Squads of men enter from both windows and the door. Wilfred turns over the prisoner to a sergeant. Arrelsford comes in hurriedly.

Arr. So! Run down at last! [THORNE *pays no attention to* ARRELSFORD. *He merely waits for the end of the disturbance.*] Now you'll find out what it costs to play your little game with our Government Telegraph Lines! [THORNE *does not even listen.* ARRELSFORD *turns to sergeant.*] Don't waste any time! Take him down the street and shoot him full of lead! Out with him!

The men utter low shouts of approval. At the same time the sergeant shoves Thorne forward. Wilfred interposes. He says he captured the man, and that he shall have fair treatment. Arrelsford angrily accords Thorne a drum-head court-martial, but says it will be the quickest ever held. The men stack their rifles and go with the

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WILLIAM GILLETTE AS CAPTAIN THORNE

Thorne tells Wilfred to shoot him if he likes, but asks to have one look at his dead brother whom he has come to see

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prisoner into another room. Old Jonas enters stealthily, crawls to the rifles, and takes the bullets out of the cartridges, putting the blanks back in the rifles one by one.

Miss Varney comes in just as Jonas is finishing, and he begs her to tell Captain Thorne to drop when the squad fire. The court-martial is soon over and the prisoner is brought back on his way out to be shot. Miss Varney requests permission to speak to him. She tells him what Jonas has done, and says that if he cares to fall to the ground he may escape with his life. He asks her if she wants him to do it. Her reply is that it is nothing to her. He turns to the sergeant and informs him the rifles have been tampered with. The sergeant thanks Thorne and orders the men to reload. Wilfred Varney comes forward and grasps Thorne's hand in admiration.

Before Thorne can be taken from the room an aide enters to say that General Randolph is coming with orders, and that he wishes to be present at the court-martial.

Arr. Impossible! We've held the court and I've sent the findings to the Secretary.

[*Enter* GENERAL RANDOLPH *hurriedly—returning salutes as he glances about. Enter, after* GENERAL RANDOLPH, *the First Telegraph Operator,* LIEUTENANT FORAY. *He stands waiting near door.*]

Sergeant [*to men*]. Carry—arms!

General Randolph. Ah, Sergeant! Got the prisoner in here, have you?

Sergeant [*saluting*]. Just taking him out, sir!

General R. Prison?

Sergeant. No, sir! To execute the sentence of the court!

General R. Had his trial then!

Arr. [*stopping with a salute*]. All done according to regulations, sir! The finding has gone to the Secretary!

General R. Found guilty I judge?

Arr. Found guilty, sir!—No time for hanging now—the court ordered him shot!

General R. What were the grounds for this?

Arr. Conspiracy against our government and the success of our arms by sending a false and misleading dispatch containing forged orders!

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General R. Court's been misinformed. The dispatch wasn't sent!

[EDITH *looks up with sudden breathless exclamation.* WILFRED *turns with surprise. General astonishment.*]

Arr. [*recovering*]. Why, General—the dispatch—I saw him——

General R. I say the dispatch wasn't sent! I expected to arrive in time for the trial and brought Foray here to testify. [*Calls to* LIEUTENANT FORAY *without looking round.*] Lieutenant! [LIEUTENANT FORAY *comes forward.*] Did Captain Thorne send out any dispatches after we left you with him in the office an hour ago?

Lieutenant Foray. No, sir. I was just going to send one under his order, but he countermanded it.

General R. What were his words at the time?

Lieutenant F. He said he refused to act under that commission.

[EDITH *turns toward* THORNE *and looks at him steadfastly.*]

General R. That'll do, Lieutenant! [LIEUTENANT FORAY *salutes and retires.*] In addition we learn from General Chesney that no orders were received over the wire—that Marston's Division was not withdrawn—and that our position was not weakened in any way. The attack at that point has been repulsed. It's plain that the court has been acting under error. The President is therefore compelled to disapprove the finding and it is set aside.

Arr. [*with great indignation*]. General Randolph, this case was put in my hands and I——

General R. [*interrupting bluffly, but without temper*]. Well, I take it out of your hands! Report back to the War Office with my compliments!

General Randolph tells Thorne that he will be held as a prisoner of war instead of being executed, the fact that he did not transmit the false order being in his favor, and it being hoped that he will enter the Confederate service.

Thorne. Why, General, that's impossible!

General R. You can give us your answer later.

Thorne. You have it now.

The General thinks that Miss Varney will bring about

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Thorne's complete conversion, but she replies that he is mistaken. Then, the General says, they will see what a little prison life will do.

Thorne [*low voice to* EDITH]. What is it—love and good-bye?

Edith [*almost a whisper*]. Oh, no—only the first! And that one every day—every hour—every minute—until we meet again!

Thorne. Until we meet again!

Sergeant. Fall in the prisoner!

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THE MOTH AND THE FLAME*

By Clyde Fitch

First played in New York at the Herald Square Theatre on April 2, 1900.

Argument: Marion Wolton, a New York society belle, courted by an old friend and highly estimable young man, and by a fascinating new acquaintance whose reputation is as bad as can be, accepts the latter on the same evening that her father commits suicide to escape the consequences of having misappropriated trust funds. The wedding ceremony is interrupted by a woman who claims to be the wife of the bridegroom, and Marion, convinced at last that her intended is a rascal, finds that he has shielded her father's name and now threatens exposure. Will the schemes of the rake be defeated and will Marion return to her old love?

Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Wolton are giving a large fancy ball at which all of the guests were requested to wear children's costumes. The reception-room is hung with dark green draperies and old portraits, and decorated with palms and gilt furniture. Through an arch at one end of the room is seen a ballroom. On the other side is a small stage before which sit a crowd of guests. Some of the guests sing and do specialties on the mimic stage.

Marion Wolton is dressed in an Empire child's gown. Kitty Rand, in short shirts, is just behind her. Douglas Rhodes wears a white sailor's costume. Kitty, who is sure she looks a sight, says she feels as if it were bathing hour at Narragansett. Ethel, an 1840 child, after finishing a song attended by irritating accompaniment, comes forward and asks Marion if Ned Fletcher is not coming. Kitty says she is glad to hear that he is, as he is quite the most amusing man in town. Ethel remarks that many

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people won't ask him to their houses. Her mother won't.

Kitty. Well, you know, your mother's a ridiculous person. She asks lots of awfully fast men!

Ethel. Yes, but they're all relatives.

Kitty [*putting arm around* ETHEL, *pricks her finger*]. I don't believe Ned Fletcher is as bad as people hint. He's too good looking.

Ethel. And I don't care whether he's bad or not. He's charming enough to make up for it. Besides, I suppose all men are bad.

Kitty. Oh—I don't know.

Ethel. I mean all nice men.

Kitty. Where has Mr. Fletcher been before this winter?

Ethel. My dear, he's one of those men who live all over the place—most of the time in Europe, but he's been here always off and on—and in Newport and in Lenox. He has yachts and things, don't you know.

Marion asks the girls to go into the ballroom while the chairs are being removed and tables brought in. Ethel and Kitty are quite aware that Marion "is heels over head" in love with Fletcher, and between themselves commiserate "poor Douglas Rhodes," the faithful suitor of long standing.

The party brings back old times to Douglas when he used to go to dancing school with Marion. He reminds her that she always used to be his partner. He wants a partner now for the game of life. She says she is very fond of him and is sorry she cannot be. She was willing once. She hesitates. He is afraid she likes some one else more. He has heard whispers and rumors. She admits that she loves the other man.

Marion. You see, every one is against him, and I feel that I have a chance to save him.

Douglas. You believe in him?

Mar. Yes.

Doug. Would you believe anything against him?

Mar. [*on the defensive, indignant*]. No!

Doug. If some one told you of something dishonorable this man had done?

Mar. I would suspect the motive of the person who told me. Do you think I haven't heard plenty of gossip

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against him? Every girl I know has done her best to take away his character, and begged me to introduce him to her in the same breath.

Doug. And if *I* spoke against him?

Mar. I know I couldn't help it, after what you've told me, I should have to feel you might be influenced by jealousy.

Doug. To *unjustly* accuse a man?

Mar. Oh, Douglas, no, of course you would believe what you said, but I wouldn't trust your judgment. Don't I know every one is down on him? Even you men—are all the men in New York so proud of their past lives?—not to mention the present of several I know. Well, if men turn a cold shoulder then we women must give him our hands.

Doug. You girls don't understand.

Mar. Oh, girls understand a good deal nowadays. Society and some of the newspapers attend to that. He doesn't pretend to be a saint to me—I find him perfectly frank—and I am afraid he has been rather fast! But I don't believe he is capable of a downright dishonest action, and nothing would make me believe it!

Doug. No proof?

Mar. Only the proof of my own eyes. When I see him do something contemptible, then I'll believe *half* the stories I hear of him!

Doug. I see you *do* love him.

Mar. I do, though you are the only person I have confessed it to, not even to him—and forgive me, but I never liked you less than I do now when you have spoken against him.

Douglas will not promise to be friends with Fletcher. He tells her that he hasn't given her up yet, and that he will not until he sees her going into the church to be married. He won't say any more against Ned—to her. What he has to say he will say to him. Fletcher enters the room the next moment, and Marion goes off with him to the ballroom.

Mrs. Wolton is surprised by the arrival of her brother, Mr. Dawson, from Boston, who has come to see Mr. Wolton on important business. Mr. Wolton is summoned from a room where he was playing blindman's buff. He

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comes in flushed and gay, an elderly man in knickerbockers and evening coat, and asks what the news is.

Dawson. The worst there could be!

Mr. Wolton [*half whispers*]. What do you mean?

Daw. [*dragging off the blindman's buff handkerchief from* WOLTON'S *neck*]. What do you mean by going in for all this tomfoolery to-night with ruin and disgrace ready for you in the morning?

Mr. W. So soon——

Daw. How long did you think you could stave it off?

Mr. W. [*sinks exhausted into a chair*]. I didn't know.

The news that Dawson brings is that Wolton has lost the fortune of his brother's wife in speculation. The only remedy Dawson says is make the money good by ruining his own wife. Wolton is forced to confess that he had already lost the fortunes of his wife and daughter as well as himself. He cannot hope that his sister-in-law, who has never liked him, will accept her ruin quietly. Dawson is very severe, not allowing himself to show what little pity he feels, and leaves him.

Mr. Wolton, who has stood a moment lost in thought, an expression of despair on his face, shudders and comes to himself. A servant enters, and Mr. Wolton tells him that he is going up to his room. He is not feeling well, he says, and if his absence should be noticed he wants it explained to Mrs. Wolton that he does not wish to be disturbed. On no account, he says, is any one to come to him until after the party is over. Halfway to the door Mr. Wolton turns for a moment, looking about the room. He is seized with a nervous twitching of the muscles and clenches his fists and grinds his teeth to control himself. Bowing his head, he goes from the room.

Guests come in from the ballroom and chatter and take supper. Mrs. Lorrimer, who has just arrived at the house, is dressed as a Watteau shepherdess and carries a lamb and crook. She asks if there is any one there she can marry. She has been divorced only twice and has a passion for it as men have for drink. She thinks Ned Fletcher nicely suited to her. They inform her that Ned is to marry Marion. They say he is "rotten rich," so it is quite evident he is not after her money.

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Mrs. Lorrimer. Very well, do you know what I shall do? I shall take Douglas.

Ethel [*nastily*]. Yes, catch his heart on the rebound, they say it's easier that way!

Johnstone. That's one on you, Mrs. Lorrimer.

Mrs. L. Oh, I'm not so very old, and have had two splendid husbands already. I don't think I have to bother about the easiest way.

Johns. Philopene, Ethel. That's one on you.

Mrs. L. Has it been your method, my dear, because if so I can't congratulate you on the result. You must look out for a stronger rebound next time! Try a divorced man, I hear they come back with terrific force! I'll be generous. Try one of mine.

All laugh. As they stop there is a sound of something heavy falling in the room above. The chandelier trembles slightly and the lustres sound. The guests lift their heads and listen a moment. After a short pause some one asks what happened. Another suggests that the servants are moving things upstairs and they think no more about it. Marion comes in and Mrs. Lorrimer inquires if Mr. Dawson is there, simply because he is unmarried. Marion says that her uncle is in Boston.

When the guests leave the supper Fletcher gets a chance to speak to Marion. He proposes quickly and is accepted. He refers to his reputation. She replies that people say a great many things that are not true. She will not believe them if he denies what they say. Douglas comes in and asks to speak to Fletcher. Marion says at first that she will not leave the two men together, but then does so.

Doug. Are you going to ask Miss Wolton to marry you?

Fletch. I am not.

Doug. [*in momentary surprise, doubt, then relief, sighs*]. In that case I've nothing more to say, let's join the others. [*Both make a move to go.*]

Fletch. [*who cannot resist saying it*]. You see, Rhodes, I have asked her already. About fifteen minutes ago—but I can't see what business it is of yours.

Doug. I love her.

Fletch. That's no news to anybody!

Doug. And I don't intend she shall marry a——

Fletch. Why don't you finish?

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Doug. [*more quietly*]. A man like you.

Fletch. Oh, I'm not so very unique. Lots of girls run the risk of marrying a man like me!

Doug. I suppose you told her she is more to you than any one in the world.

Fletch. No. "Men like me" don't talk that rot. I put my arms around her—and I told her I loved her.

Doug. [*suppressed anger*]. You couldn't say she was more than any one else to you, because it would have been a lie!

Fletch. [*smiling*]. You flatter me.

Doug. The one that is most to you is *your child.* [FLETCHER *starts.*] You can't deny the child——

Fletch. I "can" deny anything.

Doug. The lie could be proved to your face. In May, 1893, in Lenox, a young kindergarten teacher—you blackguard you!

Fletch. [*little angry*]. Who told you that story?

Doug. [*sneers*]. I'm not the only man who knows it! That sort of thing never lies buried!

Fletch. The girl's all right now!

Doug. Oh, I know, you sent her abroad, and pay for the child. Well, that's the mother's lookout, and not mine. But I don't believe she's the only case. One has only to look at your life now—it was fortunate for you this winter that Mrs. Clipton's divorce trial didn't come off.

Fletch. [*a little more angry*]. Still, what has all this to do with you? And I'll deny it all, besides, if I feel like it or need to.

He tells Douglas to go and hunt out Jeannette Gross if he can; it will do him no good. He has had all that can be got out of his old life, he says, and he is sick of it. Here is his chance at a new life, and he does not mean to give it up. He will fight for it with his last breath.

Doug. Then I say again, you are a blackguard!

Fletch. [*laughs*]. What do you want to do, fight? You know we can't here. I give you liberty to say to her all you can against me.

Douglas replies it would be no use to tell her. She would not believe him, but there is some one else who may believe the truth. Her father is the one person who will listen to him, and will verify what he hears. He says he

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will tell him that night before leaving the house, before Fletcher can announce his engagement. With Miss Wolton's permission, Fletcher returns, he will announce his engagement that night in spite of Douglas and in spite of her father.

Mrs. Lorrimer comes in to ask them to dance the cotillon. Douglas says he wants to have a few words with Mr. Wolton, and that he will see her afterward. Fletcher goes off with her. Mrs. Wolton coming just then to the archway, Douglas asks her where Mr. Wolton is, and she in turn inquires of a servant, who says that he has gone to his bedroom, leaving word that he was not to be disturbed on any account until the party was over. Douglas persists. He must see him if possible. The servant is evidently embarrassed, and Mrs. Wolton says that she will go herself to speak to her husband. She has her arms full of favors, and Marion coming along says she can't be spared and goes upstairs for her, far from guessing what Douglas has to say to her father.

In a minute or two Marion returns to the room very white and frightened. She staggers forward, stops, and gasps in a horrified whisper, calling to her mother. The music starts up a rackety air and the guests begin singing. Mrs. Wolton goes to Marion, who is unable to speak for a moment. She opens her lips but can make no sound. Then she manages to gasp out, "Father."

Mrs. Wolton. Your father—what?

She starts and looks at Marion questioningly, frightened, as the music swells and the voices of the dancers join in.

Mar. He is dead!

Mrs. W. Dead!!

Mrs. Wolton makes a movement toward the door. Marion stops her.

Mar. It's too horrible! [*In a lower voice.*] He has killed himself. [*She is almost fainting.*]

The dancers appear in the ballroom hand in hand in single file and dance in wildly, all singing, "Won't You Come and Play With Me." They make a big circle about Marion and Mrs. Wolton, dancing out again into the ballroom. As soon as the two women are left alone, Douglas comes back to ask if he may go up. He notices that Mrs. Wolton looks ill.

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He helps Marion take Mrs. Wolton to her room. The dance is soon stopped and the guests dispersed. Fletcher claims his right to be regarded as one of the family.

Many guests are invited to the wedding of Marion Wolton and Ned Fletcher. They are beginning to arrive in the lavishly decorated church. Johnstone, Fanshaw, and Trimmins are among the ushers. They have plenty of time to talk at first. It appears that Fanshaw is a warm partisan of Douglas Rhodes. He holds that Fletcher's wild oats were a serious matter. Johnstone says Fletcher is sorry for them.

Fanshaw. If he's honestly sorry, he's no business marrying Marion Wolton.

Johns. Why not?

Fan. He has a debt to be paid. He can't wash his hands of the kind of things he's done. If he were in earnest in regretting his old life he would do something to make up for it.

Johns. Well, isn't he? He's going to marry a nice girl and settle down.

Fan. If he were in earnest he'd marry instead one of at least two girls I know of—not this one.

Johns. Oh, come, there's no reason why he should do a quixotic thing like that. He has a future before him.

Fan. He has their futures before him.

Johns. Don't preach. Why should he be dragged down——

Fan. To where he dragged them?

Johns. Exactly. Fletcher's no fool. And then there's Mr. Dawson. He swears by Fletcher now. They're regular pals.

Fan. Ever since Mr. Wolton's death. I don't understand it.

Doug. [*coming toward them*]. Yes, Dawson really believes in Fletcher—well, perhaps he's right. There must be some good in everybody and perhaps Fletcher is just beginning to come to the top. Let's hope so.

Douglas confides in Fanshaw that it is a hard day for him.

Mrs. Lorrimer and a number of Marion's girl friends occupy front pews and are babbling busily. Mrs. Lorri-

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mer says she has her eyes on Mr. Dawson. Ethel fears she would never be able to get him into a divorce court, but Mrs. Lorrimer returns that she has resigned from the Divorce Club, as the membership was beginning to get too mixed.

At last Fletcher and his groomsman enter amid a little flutter of excitement, and then a faint sound is heard of men's and boys' voices singing with the organ the wedding hymn. The choristers enter, followed by the six ushers, the four bridesmaids, and the bride on the arm of Mr. Dawson. The party group themselves about the chancel steps and the clergyman comes forward.

The guests continue their conversation while the clergyman reads the first part of the service unheard. Finally there is a lull and his voice alone is heard.

Clergyman. If any man . . . [*a door is shut heavily off stage.* DOUGLAS *goes out, and a young woman,* JEANNETTE GROSS, *enters.* DOUGLAS *returns*] . . . can show just cause why these two persons should not lawfully be joined together—[*a commotion among the guests, who turn away from the altar to look back into the church*]—let him now speak—[DOUGLAS *goes to top of aisle to block passage*]—or else hereafter forever hold his peace.

Jeannette comes forward to the foot of the chancel steps and cries "Stop!" She is a young and attractive looking woman, fashionably but quietly dressed. All in the church are stunned. The groom, turning, sees her, and starts, but controls himself, glaring at Jeannette. Marion gazes in terror and horror at her, her bouquet drops unnoticed. Mrs. Wolton starts to leave her pew, but is held back and persuaded by Mrs. Fletcher to remain where she is. Mr. Dawson steps down one step toward Jeannette.

Daw. Who are you?

Jeannette [*with a gesture toward* FLETCHER]. Ask him.

Daw. What right have you to interrupt this ceremony?

Jean. Ask him.

Fletch. She has no right. [JEANNETTE *makes an exclamation of denial.*]

Mar. Swear that, Ned. Swear that to me before this altar.

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Fletch. [*hesitates a moment*]. I swear it.

Mar. [*to* CLERGYMAN]. Go on with the ceremony.

Dawson steps back to his place. The clergyman takes up his prayer book. Jeannette comes up one of the chancel steps.

Jean. Stop!

Fletch. Is there no one here to put this woman out?

Fletcher speaks to the groomsman. Dawson speaks to Fanshaw, who goes out, and immediately after the music ceases. The clergyman asks Jeannette if she can show any reason—— She interrupts him to say she can, and he tells her to do so. Replying that she will, she goes out quickly. Guests leave, and Mrs. Wolton asks Mr. Dawson to take the bridesmaids into the choir room. The ushers facilitate the departure of the guests.

Fletch. I say that woman cannot stop this ceremony. Go on.

Mar. You have heard him give me his word. Go on.

Clergyman. I am very sorry, but the church does not allow me to. I must give her the chance to prove herself.

Jeannette reënters, leading a small child, and goes straight up to the foot of the chancel steps. She points at Fletcher, the child clinging to her skirts. The child, she says, is Fletcher's and hers. The remaining guests leave the church quietly. Fletcher asks the clergyman to demand her proofs. Surely, he says, there can be no question between her word and his when she is "that sort of a thing."

The clergyman goes to Jeannette. Marion comes down the steps with Fletcher, but does not look at him. He asks if she despises him, reminding her that he had confessed to her that before he met her his life had not been fit to be lived in the same world with her. She does not despise him, because she loves him, and she believes that since he has known her he has been good and honest.

Jean. This is not legal proof, you say?

Clergyman. It is not sufficient.

Jean. But it's moral proof.

Marion goes back to her place, motioning to Fletcher to follow her, which he does, but almost timidly.

Jean. So long as he remains as he is there's a chance that the world won't always be able to fling my boy's

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shame in his face. And I tell you, sir, the agony she would suffer now is nothing . . . *nothing* to what her life with him would be. And think of what it is—[*her emotion racks her*]—to watch your child, your own flesh and blood, day and night, all its life, terror-stricken lest you find some trace of his father in him!

Mar. [*turns to clergyman*]. We are waiting.

Clergyman. But . . .

Mar. I love him. I am not willing to give him up for that woman!

Clergyman. But she swears a compact of marriage was made.

Mar. Has she proofs? I have his word against hers. That is enough.

Clergyman [*to* FLETCHER]. But I believe you do not deny the child?

Fletcher. Yes . . . yes, I *do* deny it.

Mar. This man's past, sir, is not yours, nor mine. But his present does belong to me, and his future shall be mine, too, to *make* not *hers to mar.*

Fletch. [*impatient*]. Come, we've lost enough time. Let's finish this. [*Clergyman goes to his place behind the chancel rails.*]

Jean. [*going up a step*]. You shall not go on with this marriage.

Fletch. She has shown what she is by the way she has chosen to stop it.

Jean. That's a cowardly lie! And it was only when I saw by the papers that my letters had been useless that I decided to humiliate myself in this way. Do you think I would so degrade my womanhood for the sake of anything on God's earth, but *one* . . . my child? [*To* MARION.] Do you think I could do anything but loathe him?

Mar. But I love him.

Jean. So did I once. And now I'd save you if I could from all I know you'll have to suffer. Once you're his he'll tire of you.

Mar. You forget one thing. He is going to put a wedding ring on my hand.

Jean. Well, look at that! [*She rips her glove off violently and shows a wedding ring.*] He placed it there! and said he'd take me to a church and make our compact binding.

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Fletcher says the woman is from the streets and is up to all the tricks. Marion declares she will not leave the church until she is married. But Jeannette insists the ceremony shall not go on. She says that it was Fletcher who ruined her, and that since the day he tricked her she has fought the fight for honor for the sake of her boy. She pleads with Marion not to make vows that will take away the innocent child's name. Fletcher, she swears, is the child's father and her husband.

Fletch. [*in a fearful rage*]. You lie!

Enter MRS. WOLTON *and* MRS. FLETCHER.

Mar. [*surprised, pained*]. Sh-h . . . Go on.

Jean. [*coming between* MARION *and* FLETCHER, *she utters a wild, heartbroken, desperate cry*]. No! You shall not write bastard on the forehead of my child!

Fletch. [*beside himself*]. By God!

He strikes Jeannette, who falls. Marion starts back. The two mothers step forward with exclamations of fright and anger. Dawson hurries forward from the choir. Marion draws a long breath, and with contempt and anger calls Fletcher a coward. Her uncle hands her the wedding bouquet and she dashes it at Fletcher's feet. Then, turning from him, takes her uncle's arm and goes down the chancel steps and out of the church.

The next day Mrs. Lorrimer is engaged in the library at the Woltons' in wrapping up the wedding presents and returning them to the donors, with the assistance of two servants. Mrs. Wolton tells her that Marion has sent for Fletcher and is going to have him meet Jeannette, who is upstairs, in an attempt to make him marry her.

Mrs. Wolton then speaks of Mrs. Lorrimer herself, who she says is considered somewhat frivolous, but that she says is only the rouge and powder of Mrs. Lorrimer's character. She knows that underneath Mrs. Lorrimer is plain and sincere. Mrs. Lorrimer is not mad about being plain, but she would like to be sincere. She has had to laugh in the world's face so that the world would not laugh in hers.

Mrs. W. What you need now, as you did in the beginning, is a good husband—like mine was.

Mrs. L. Good men don't grow on bushes, and besides, good men don't seem to care about me.

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Mrs. W. I know just the man, and I believe he's been in love with you for years, though he may not know it himself! [MRS. LORRIMER *looks at her questioningly.* MRS. WOLTON *goes to her and putting her arms around her neck whispers in her ear.*] I want you for a sister-in-law.

Mrs. Lorrimer is embarrassed and pleased. Dawson enters suddenly and Mrs. Wolton leaves them together. Mrs. Lorrimer is disappointed, however, for Dawson does not continue the subject which Mrs. Wolton had introduced. Instead, he informs her of the reason why Mr. Wolton killed himself, "to escape being convicted of a crime." He tells her that Mr. Wolton had misappropriated funds entrusted to his care, and that exposure became inevitable.

Daw. The night of the catastrophe Fletcher announced his engagement to Marion, and claimed his right to bear a share of the family's trouble. I took him at his word by asking him to come to the rescue of his future wife's name and honor with—money!

Mrs. L. And he has never breathed a word?

Daw. That was only natural up to yesterday, but now——

Mrs. L. He doesn't threaten to tell?

Daw. He does, unless Marion marries him. He's mad about her. The good in him has loved her up to now, now it's the devil in him. He's not the same man!

Mrs. L. And what do you want me to do?

Daw. Advise me. Shall we tell Marion?

Mrs. L. No, no! Not if we can help it! Fletcher must be paid every cent he gave.

Mr. Dawson has already given his money. He could borrow on his life insurance, but he says the money should be borrowed privately. Mrs. Lorrimer says she knows of some one to borrow it from, and tells him to go and prevent Fletcher from coming to the house. Before he leaves she stops him to ask why he has never married. There is only one woman, he tells her, with whom he would risk it, and unfortunately she has a way of divorcing all her husbands. She suggests that he needn't give the woman a chance to divorce him. She doesn't want to guess who the woman is, but to know for certain. He tells her she is the woman, and she says she is ready to run the risk if he is.

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After Dawson has gone Marion enters. She talks to Mrs. Lorrimer about her plan to make Fletcher marry Jeannette, and says she thinks she can induce him if he loves her. He has practically acknowledged that what Jeannette says is true. For her part, her love for Fletcher is dead. She believes that a man who would strike a woman is capable of anything. She is grateful for her escape. Fletcher is announced. When he comes in he seems to think that everything is to be made all right between him and Marion. But she tells him at once that Jeannette is there.

Fletcher starts and his whole manner changes. He realizes now that he has to fight for what he wants and against what he does not want. She tells him that she has promised to try to make him marry Jeannette. He pleads with her, urging his love, but she says that only by making what reparation is in his power can he save himself from being utterly contemptible in her eyes. He refuses angrily. He will marry only her. She laughs.

Fletch. [*angrily*]. And I will marry you.

Mar. No, you'll not!

Fletch. I will *force* you to marry me.

Mar. How dare you take that tone with me?

Fletch. I dare more than that.

Mar. [*goes to bell*]. Take care or I'll have the servants turn you out of the house! [FLETCHER *laughs ironically.*] *Will* you marry Jeannette Gross?

Fletch. [*more angry*]. No! [*He follows her.*] And I won't leave this house, either. [*Takes her hand.*]

Mar. Don't touch me!

Fletch. I won't leave the house, because it's *mine!* And so will you be.

Mar. No!

Fletch. Yes, you will, because I'll buy you with your father's reputation!

Mar. With what!

Fletch. With your father's good name.

Mar. You—scoundrel!

Fletch. We are well mated, for you are the daughter of one! [MARION *immediately touches the bell.*] You had better dismiss the servant when he comes. I am sure you would rather he didn't hear all I have to say.

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Marion feels secure in her confidence in her father. She tells the servant to ask her mother to come to her. Fletcher goes on. He says her father took his life the night of the fancy ball to save it from being disgraced, because he was a thief. Marion commands him to stop, and draws herself up and looks him in the face. Her mother comes in, a little frightened, and Marion takes her hand and the two women stand confronting Fletcher. Marion tells him to repeat the vile slander of her father if he dares.

Fletch. All that I said is true and more!

Mrs. W. What is true? What did he say? [*A pause.* FLETCHER *remains doggedly silent.*]

Mar. Ah! You daren't repeat it before my mother! [FLETCHER *sneers.*] You know she would prove the lie in your face! Did you think you would frighten me into marrying you? Do you think a man with a reputation like yours could injure the reputation of a man like my father, loved by every one?

Fletch. And who cheated those very people who loved him—that's only what *I* did. He was no better than I——

Mrs. Wolton makes a movement and an effort to interrupt him.

Mar. Let him finish, mother. [*Holding her back.*]

Fletch. He left you both beggars, and robbed his own sister besides.

Mrs. W. *It is not true!*

Mar. [*not believing him*]. How is it then that we have everything, everything we could wish for? How is it we have lived in our old home, lived our old life, if we are beggars?

Fletch. How?—thanks to my money. *I've* paid for it all!

Marion keeps her mother from speaking. Fletcher tells them that this is his house that they are in. They are stunned, speechless, unable to comprehend and believe, yet unable to contradict. Dawson returns. Fletcher calls upon him to bear out what he has said. Dawson reluctantly complies.

Fletch. [*bursting out*]. I wanted you to feel an obligation to me—I don't want to lose you. You loved me yesterday. If you were once bound to me you'd love me again. You can't change like that over night.

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Mar. If yesterday had left any love for you in my heart you would have destroyed it by what you have done to-day.

Marion says they will manage to pay Fletcher back in time. He says he won't hold his tongue. He doesn't care about the money, but if he can't have her he won't accept the disgrace she helped heap on him the day before. If she throws him over he swears he will make public her father's record. Dawson says it would be better for them to accept the disgrace than permit Marion to marry him.

Mar. [*to* FLETCHER]. I never thought I would humble myself before you, but I do now and I beg you for the love you say you have for me, spare the name of a man who at least never harmed you! Don't dishonor my father's memory. Isn't it enough revenge for you that my mother and I know it! [*With tears.* FLETCHER *is a little affected, but* DAWSON *does not see this and interrupts. He pulls* MARION *away from before* FLETCHER.]

Daw. No—I won't have you pleading to him!

Fletcher. I know who I have to thank for all this—Rhodes!

Mar. There is no need to mention his name.

Fletch. Isn't there? It was he who brought Jeannette here—it was he we both have to thank for yesterday's ordeal.

Mar. [*to* DAWSON *half heartedly*]. What? [*She places her mother on the sofa.*]

Fletch. You didn't believe me when I told you of your father! But this is as true as that was. And the night you promised to marry me Rhodes threatened to do this very thing.

Mar. It isn't possible! He wouldn't have submitted me to yesterday's humiliation!

Fletch. How else could she—living quietly in a little town in Switzerland—know of our affairs here?

Dawson says he must confess that Rhodes tried to prejudice him, and Marion remembers that he tried to influence her. Accordingly, when Rhodes is announced the next minute, Mrs. Wolton is ready to tell him that he must excuse them from seeing him. But Mrs. Lorrimer comes in and says she has brought Mr. Rhodes.

Mar. Mother is right. It should have been enough for Mr. Rhodes to have witnessed our humiliation yester-

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day. It is adding another insult for him to come here to-day.

Mrs. L. Marion, you don't know what you're saying.

Doug. [*stops* MRS. LORRIMER]. No! Miss Wolton is doubtless right—you did not tell me Mr. Fletcher was here, or I shouldn't have been persuaded to come. I prefer to go——

Mr. Dawson says it is only fair that the reason why Douglas came should be known. Marion decides to call in Jeannette to settle at once the question of how she happened to return. Fletcher declares he will not remain to see her, but she enters at once. She tells them that a woman friend wrote to her that Mr. Fletcher was going to be married. Marion begs Douglas's pardon.

Finding that he has lost irretrievably, Fletcher says that he will not disturb Mr. Wolton's memory, because he still loves his daughter. He takes a last look at Marion and goes out. Jeannette seizes Marion's hand. Marion goes out after Fletcher. When she comes back it is to tell Jeannette that Fletcher has promised to give her his name.

Mrs. L. [*crosses to* MARION]. Now, Marion, I want you to know why Douglas came.

Douglas [*rises*]. Please—— [*He shakes his head.*]

Daw. But she *must* know some time.

Doug. Not before me.

Daw. Have you forgotten, Marion, our debt to Fletcher?

Mar. [*realizing what it is, to* DOUGLAS]. *You* would—— Oh, no, rather leave the debt with him to repay.

Doug. Why?

Mar. Because I owe you now more than I can ever repay, for the wonderful friendship you have given me all my life! I haven't the right to accept anything more from you.

Doug. Let me be the judge of that——

Mar. Still, after all that's gone by you don't hate me?

Doug. [*forgetting himself*]. Hate you? No, I——

Dawson stops him with a firm, quiet touch on the arm and tells him to wait. Douglas asks Marion if she will leave the debt with him, and as Marion replies that she will, Mrs Lorrimer, Mrs. Wolton, and Dawson exchange happy and hopeful glances.

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STRONGHEART*

By William C. DeMille

First played in New York at the Hudson Theatre on January 30, 1905.

Argument: Strongheart, an Indian student at Columbia, is in love with the sister of his friend and classmate, the captain of the football team, and is anxious to distinguish himself in his last football game, but a member of the team has given the signals to their opponents. Suspicion of having betrayed Columbia is cast on Strongheart, and the captain not only takes him out of the game, but forbids him, as a member of an inferior race, to pay court to his sister. Will Strongheart be vindicated, and will he win the girl?

The preparation of a college room for the reception of ladies at five o'clock tea is an edifying sight. Shortly before the guests are expected the fellows roll up their sleeves and go at the job as if they were clearing a ship for action. A great litter of books, paper, and miscellaneous junk disappears rapidly before the onslaught. Much of it is kicked into a closet or under a couch. Some of the most important things are overlooked until the last moment.

One privileged to look on has a good opportunity for observing student types and for picking up interesting facts in the lives of the inmates. We should know of our own knowledge, undoubtedly, that Frank Nelson is a senior and the captain of the Columbia football team, and that his roommate, Dick Livingston, is a junior and the best halfback in America, but unless we heard it mentioned we might not know that their inseparable friend Strongheart, the son of an Indian chief, saved Frank's life three years ago out West.

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The last and most important football game of the season is to be played soon, on Thanksgiving Day, and little else is talked of. Some of the students have staked a good deal of money on the game. Dick Livingston, in fact, has put up three thousand dollars, not because he could afford it, but because he had already lost that amount gambling when he had broken training and has had recourse to this desperate expedient to escape disgrace and expulsion from college. The game is almost a matter of life and death to him.

Another member of the football team, Thorne, who is a special student, persuaded Dick that he could recoupe his losses by betting on the game, and undertook to place the money for him. Thorne is a thoroughly vicious fellow. Not only has he no feeling of loyalty to Columbia, but he would stoop to any means to ruin Dick as his rival for the affections of Frank's sister, Dorothy. Shortly before the preparations for the tea have reached an acute stage Thorne finds himself alone in Frank's and Dick's room. He takes advantage of the opportunity to filch a list of the football team's signals which are in Dick's handwriting.

In addition to Thorne's interest in ruining Dick, he has also wagered so much money on Columbia's opponents that a Columbia victory would mean ruin to himself. By sending the signals to the opposing team, however, he is so confident that he can secure Columbia's defeat that he arranges to borrow an extra thousand to bet.

Frank comes in with numerous packages of supplies, and Dick follows with a load of cups and saucers. The condition of the coffee pot comes under Frank's suspicion and, unable to put his hands on a spare towel, he takes a clean shirt of Dick's, explaining the necessity of his action afterward as he returns from an inner room, doing the polishing.

Billy Saunders arrives. He is a big man and has a dachshund tied with blue and white ribbons on a leash. Frank goes to a desk for a list of football signals to give him, and hands him one that Thorne substituted for the copy in Dick's handwriting.

Nobody knows how long the tea should be boiled. And Taylor only got two pounds, which is only a sixth of a pound apiece for twelve persons, obviously a very scant allowance.

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It is already after five o'clock when Strongheart arrives. The fellows are doing a war dance around when Dick reports that the girls are coming. They start rushing about the room, trying to straighten things out, but only make them look worse. Billy snatches a pair of trousers from a couch and throws them through a doorway. The champagne empties and poker chips are sequestered, and at the last instant Billy snatches down a number of brightly colored ladies' stockings from a curtain pole just before the entrance of Mrs. Nelson, Dorothy Nelson, Molly Livingston, and three or four other girls. Dick is soon talking to Dorothy about the game.

Dorothy. We're going to be in the front row of the centre section, but I suppose you won't be able to see us.

Dick. No, but we'll know you're there, and it'll make us play harder. It means a good deal to a fellow to have the right girl watching the game.

Dor. And will the "right girl" be there, Dick?

Dick. Yes. She'll be sitting in the front row of the centre section. You know who it is Dorothy. I want to win for you.

Dor. Why, Dick, how serious you are. It's only a game.

Dick. Yes, but sometimes the big things of life get mixed up in a game, so that if you lose, you lose everything.

Dor. You're getting morbid, Dick. It's no disgrace to lose.

Most of the others are in higher spirits. Molly is appointed a coach, the men give her a cheer and sing the Faculty Song:

In Heaven above where all is love,
The Faculty won't be there.
But down below, where all is woe,
The Faculty will be there. Singing,
C-O-L-U-M-B-I-A, C-O-L-U-M-B-I-A, C-O-L-U-M-B-I-A,
Ray, ray, ray for old Columbia,
Cheer, now, boys, she's out of sight;
Ere the sun has sunk to rest in the cradle of the West
In the clouds will proudly float the Blue and White!

[*At the end of song dog is heard howling dismally.*]

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Dorothy has heard that Strongheart will be in condition to play in the coming game, and tells Strongheart that Frank says it means they will win. She wants him to win the game for Columbia.

Strongheart. Only for Columbia?

Dor. Well, for me, too, if you wish.

Strong. Then I will play as I never played before for Columbia, and for you. It will be my last game.

Dor. Your last game?

Strong. Yes. I have received another letter from my people. They are waiting for me to come back to them.

Dor. But you're not going yet?

Strong. No, not yet. But my college life will soon be over, and then I wish to do for them all the things we have planned out together. Miss Nelson, you do not realize what you have been to me during this past year.

Dor. [*sitting in chair R. of desk*]. Have I really then been of any help to you?

Strong. You have given me more than help, for you showed me my duty to my people. You made me know that the son of a chief must fit himself to govern wisely.

Dor. I did want to help a little. It is so seldom nowadays that one meets a man of high purpose and ideals. And your position gives you a great opportunity.

Strong. It is you who showed me that. You told me of the advantages civilization would bring to my people. That when we had learned your ways and obeyed your laws you would call us brothers. From that day my one thought, my one ambition has been that your words might come true. Your people and mine dwelling together in peace. It is for that I am working, and you showed me the way.

Dor. You give me credit I do not deserve. You have worked alone—[*rises*]—and I want you to know, Strongheart, that for what you have done I admire and respect you.

Strong. [*much moved, but impassive*]. Miss Nelson, what you think of my work means very much to me, you have made me very happy.

Investigation is made to see whether Billy's dog, Siegfried, shut in the next room, has committed suicide upon hearing his master sing, but it appears that he has done

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nothing more desperate than to eat three strings off a guitar. Strongheart thinks that Billy, having given the dog such a name, should not blame him for having a taste for music.

Billy [*crossing to upper end of couch*]. Now will you answer my question?

Molly. What question?

Billy [*pointing to L. 3*]. The one I asked you in there.

Molly. Well, if you really want me to believe that I'm the only girl you ever cared anything about, you've got to do something to prove it.

Billy [*sits*]. Yes, but gee whiz, a fellow can't do anything heroic nowadays without getting pinched. Now, if you and I'd only lived about 'steen hundred years ago.

Molly. Yes, and what would you have done, brave Sir Billy?

Billy [*perfectly simply*]. Oh, the usual stunts. I'd have browsed around on a nickel-plated plug until I got up against some gazabo that thought his lady fair was the whole cheese. Then I'd tell him he had bats in his belfry, and that I was carrying a pretty fine line of ladies fair myself. Then I'd put him out of business just to show him that my lady fair was the main squeeze.

Molly. Say, Mr. Saunders, you're awfully romantic, aren't you?

Billy. Yes, I guess I am, now. But before I met you I was several chips shy on romance. Say, I know what I can do. [*Rises, backs to C.*] If you want me to, I'll try and kill the other centre for you next Thursday.

Molly [*rising and crossing to him*]. Oh, no, don't kill him on my account. [*Rises and crosses.*] I'll tell you what you can do. Give me something that means a great deal to you. Something you've sworn you'd never part with. [BILLY *pulls out his watch and offers it.*] Some girl's picture or something.

[*During this speech* BILLY *feels his scarfpin and ring.*]

Billy. Why, I never was much of a lady's man, Miss Molly, and I guess this list of signals is the only thing I haven't got the right to give away. You see no girl ever thought enough of me to give me anything of her own. [*He has had his hands in his pockets during this speech.*

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Now pulls out his right hand with the stockings in it and wipes his forehead. Sees what he has and quickly passes them behind his back to L. pocket. Then takes out signals from inside pocket.] I suppose these signals might do, because if any one knows that I let them go out of my hands, well, it would be down and out for mine.

Molly [*delighted*]. Oh, then I'll hold you in my power, won't I?

Strongheart has noticed that Dick seems troubled, and when they are alone he asks him what the matter is. Dick tells him that he has contracted debts that he has no means of paying. He has come to care a good deal for a girl lately and on that account has been keeping pretty straight, but now things look very bad.

Told by the coach that he was trained too fine, Dick had a few drinks. Then somehow he got into Thorne's room where a crowd were playing poker. He was just drunk enough not to know what he was doing, but not enough to show it. When he got through he had lost three thousand dollars. Then Thorne persuaded him to borrow that much more from him and back Columbia in the hope of winning it all back again.

Strong. So you are six thousand short.

Dick. Yes. And more than that depends on the game.

Strong. More?

Dick. Yes, if we lose I must leave college and will have no right to speak to——[*Hesitates.*]

Strong. To whom, Dick?

Dick. I won't name her now, not even to you. But it's the girl I——

Strong. *The* girl, Dick?

Dick. Yes. I'd be disgraced in her eyes.

Strong. Why did not you tell me of this before?

Dick. You haven't any money to spare, Strongheart.

Strong. That is not the point. There is some combination here I do not quite see through. There must be something in it for Thorne.

Dick. Thorne?

Strong. Yes. Thorne saw you were not yourself, and then won your money. Thorne lent you more. Thorne got you to bet. I do not like the looks of it.

Dick. But what has he against me?

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Strong. I do not know. But I will find out. [*Rises and takes* DICK *by the arms.*] Look here, old man, you are the only hope we have got in Thursday's game. Now you think football, talk football, eat football, and dream football, and I will just take a hand in this other business myself.

Dick. No, it's a bad mess, Strongheart. You'd better keep out of it.

[*Students are heard singing "Amici."*]

Strong. [*pointing L. 3*]. Dick, do you hear what they are singing in here? "Friends until death." That is what our college stands for, and am I not one of you?

Dick [*very firmly*]. Yes.

Strong. Then fight for "her," Dick, and whatever comes we will face it together.

The quarters of the Columbia team at the Polo Grounds is a large, dingy, whitewashed room with rows of lockers against the walls, benches and a supply of water bottles, sponges, buckets, towels, blankets, and sweaters lying about. The room is deserted, for the game is going on outside. The crowd can be heard singing a Columbia football song and then giving a yell.

Nash, one of the team, is brought in disabled and protesting obstinately against leaving the game. Prolonged cheers mark the conclusions of the first half of the game during which neither side has scored.

Frank, Dick, Thorne, Billy, and Strongheart come in, followed by fifteen or more men of the team and substitutes, and also rubbers. The men who have been playing are plastered with mud. The rubbers sponge off their faces, and the trainers look them over for injuries. The head coach, Buckley, comes in and strides toward the men with a look of the deepest scorn and contempt. "Athletes, my eye!" says he. "Do you think you can make athletes out of a bunch of cigarette smoking cocktail drinking idiots?"

Buckley. Well, you're a pretty fine lot of football men, you are. You ought to be out somewhere playing ping pong. Do you men realize that the eyes of the University are on you? That if you lose this game you're a disgraced team without a single damn chance to redeem yourselves? I never saw a team play such a

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silly game way up in the air, high as hell all the time. Ross, come over here. You play tackle next half. [Ross *crosses to lower end of bench L.*] Thorne, you've got to keep low. You missed your tackle twice. Now if you do that again, you come off this team. Three times they got through you, and the second time the whole damn line came through. You ends, whip up your speed, whip it up. Get down that field and be waiting for the ball and when the man catches it kill him, down hard in his tracks. Frank—[FRANK *crosses down to him*]—keep closer on defence, keep your eye on that ball and fight for every drop there is in you. [FRANK *goes back up stage.* BUCKLEY *turns to team.*] For Heaven help this aggregation if you lose. Livingston, don't get penalized: you've cost the team twenty yards to-day. And you backs, don't get fooled; if a play don't smell good to you, keep out of it till you see where the ball's going. Saunders, *fight, fight*—you're a good centre but you're too pacific. Don't be so damned polite. Get into the other man and kill him. Get mad, damn it all, get mad. O—O—O—I don't seem to be able to talk a spirit of fight into this team. You're not making an afternoon call, you're playing football, so fight for it every inch of the game. If you do we can pull it through. No one scored last half, so they think they can win. But they can't if you'll only show you're true blue and smash it in. You men have been relying too much on Strongheart and Dick, but they can't play the whole game by themselves. Break up their interference and kill the ends. Why, you haven't put a single end out of business to-day. Now when you go out on that field you win this game. It's going to be hard as hell but you can do it. And remember that you're representing your University, and you've got to win this game if it kills the whole damn team! That's all.

He turns from men who begin to talk in low tones among themselves, objecting to being roasted so unmercifully when they have put up a very stiff game, no one having scored.

Farley, the manager of the other team, comes to the door and asks for the captain. Frank goes to meet him.

Farley. Yes, Nelson. I tried to see you before the

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first half, but could not get at you. I came on rather a disagreeable errand, so I'd better come right to the point. [FRANK, BUCKLEY, *and* FARLEY *stand together during this scene extreme R.*] There's a man somewhere in Columbia football affairs that ought to be kicked out.

Frank. What do you mean?

Far. I mean that a complete list of your signals came to me by mail yesterday.

Frank. Why, it's impossible. What motive could make one of our men betray his team? I can't believe it.

Far. Well, I've heard from a reliable source that some Columbia man has been backing our team heavily. I suppose it was the same man who sent us the signals, and thought you might like to know about it.

Frank. Then you knew our signals during the first half?

Far. Hold on, Nelson. We make sportsmen at our college, too. Not one of my team has seen this list except myself. [*Takes it out of pocket.*] We'll try to win this game without any help from Columbia. I give you my word of honor that I myself have not read this list.

Frank. I beg your pardon, Farley, I was too quick. Your word is quite sufficient. [*Extends his hand,* FARLEY *takes it.*]

Far. Well, I won't keep you any longer. I've only done what I thought was the square thing in bringing this back. [*Hands* FRANK *the envelope.*] Now, it's up to you. I'll see you later.

He goes out in a dead silence. As soon as he is off Frank turns to team, mad.

Frank. Boys, some member of this squad is no Columbia man, and has got to be kicked off this team before next half. [*Holds up list.*] Our signals have been sent to Farley.

All the men [*rising*]. What!!!!

Frank's hand is bandaged and he cannot open the list. He hands it to Strongheart. Upon seeing the writing Strongheart starts and puts the list behind him. He suggests waiting till after the game, but Thorne thrusts himself forward and insists upon airing the affair at once. He says that it concerns the whole team and that the

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whole team should deal with it. Dick supports him, declaring that a man who would do such a thing deserves no consideration.

Thorne. If you don't it will look as if you had reasons for concealing it.

Strong. What do you mean, Thorne?

Thorne. It will look as if the writing were your own.

Strong. Thorne! [*Makes a move toward* THORNE, DICK *holds him.*]

Thorne. Show me the list and if I'm wrong I'll apologize. I've got nothing against you personally, but I want to see the man who wrote that kicked off the team.

Billy [*down L.*]. Boys, you know Strongheart. If he's got a reason for not showing us this until after the game, it must be all right. I say we leave it until then.

[*The extra men should be divided into several squads of two or three men. Each squad with different lines.*]

All the Men. No! no. Show it to us now.

Strong. [*to* DICK]. You do not doubt me, Dick?

Dick. Old man, if the signals had been in my writing, would you have doubted me?

Strong. [*firmly*]. No, Dick, I would not.

Frank [*to* STRONG]. I don't doubt you either, old man, but we must make some explanation to the team. Come, out with it.

Strong. I have no explanation to offer. [*To team.*] But, boys, I give you my word of honor——

Thorne. It is your honor that is in question.

Strong. I shall not answer for it to you, Thorne.

Frank. Thorne, the team has elected officers to manage its affairs, and we don't care for your help.

Thorne. Then, why don't the officers manage its affairs and not let an Indian come here out of a wigwam and run things to suit himself.

All of the men demand to see the list. Frank tells them to meet at his house the next day to discuss it. The men are willing to agree to this if Strongheart shows the list to some one man who can identify it afterward. Strongheart shows it to Billy, who recognizes Dick's writing and thinks that the list is the one which he gave to Molly Livingston. Meanwhile Frank and Buckley have de-

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cided that Strongheart must be taken out of the game as the men believe that he has sold them out.

During the second half Strongheart watches the game from the window and describes the plays to Nash, who is extended on a bench. First the Columbia team are driven back. Thorne misses a tackle. Finally Columbia holds on her fifteen-yard line. A trick play is tried and Dick Livingston goes through the line and down the field. He is tackled at the goal line, but Billy drags him over.

The team swarm into the dressing-room through door and window and drown the racket outside with a mighty yell led by the coach.

There is a dance in the evening after the game at the Nelsons' home to celebrate the victory. When Molly gets a chance to speak to Dorothy privately in the library she assures her that any one who is half feminine could see that Strongheart has been head over heels in love with her for a year.

Dor. Molly, if I ask you a question, will you be serious.

Molly. As serious as I can be.

Dor. Then, tell me, if he were in love with you, and asked you to marry him, what would you do?

Molly. Am I supposed to be in love with him?

Dor. Perhaps.

Molly. Well, if I were in love with him, and he proposed to me, I'd say yes before he'd finished asking me.

Dor. But, his race.

Molly [*rising and stepping back*]. Dorothy Nelson, do you mean to tell me that if you really loved a man, a thing like that would make any difference?

Dor. But, what would mother and Frank say?

Molly. Oh, they might be a little startled at first, but they'd soon get used to it. [*Crossing to chair.*] Why, do you love him, Dorothy?

Dor. [*rising*]. Oh, I don't believe it's love, it's just fascination, and yet if it were love, I—— [*Turns to* MOLLY.] Oh, Molly, it's terrible to be afraid of love.

Molly. Dorothy!

Dor. This has been growing on me for a year. I've fought it and fought it, but I can't put it away. [*Crosses to R.*] I'm afraid of it, Molly, I'm afraid. [*Turns to*

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MOLLY.] Oh, it can't be love if I have that feeling. And yet, there's something about him that makes all the others seem small. A great purpose, and absolute truth in his eyes. [*Crosses to* MOLLY.] Oh, Molly, what am I to do?

[*Waltz starts.*]

Molly. Dorothy, when he speaks to you, never mind reasons, just say to him whatever your heart tells you to say.

Dor. [*kissing her*]. Thank you.

They go out to dance, and Billy comes in with Dick. Billy says there has been a mix-up, but that he cannot speak plainly as Dick is her brother. Billy starts off again to find Strongheart. Dick has made up his mind to propose to Dorothy that evening and is assured of Frank's approval and hearty support.

Strongheart sits out a dance with Dorothy and asks her to sit in front of the fire so that the firelight will fall upon her face as it did once long ago.

Dor. That night of our first camp?

Strong. Yes.

Dor. How frightened I was at the cry of the mountain lion.

Strong. It did not show in your face, and your hand was as steady as my own. [*Crossing above her.*] There now, you look as you did then. The night that began my life. Ah, what a beautiful night it was. We had no walls then to keep the moonlight out, and no lamps to drown the firelight.

Dor. We do not have such nights here.

Strong. You have them, but you do not use them. See? [*Crosses to button above fireplace and touches it. All the lights but table lamp go out.*] Is not this better?

Dor. Yes. [*Leaning toward fire.*] Now, I can see the figures we traced that night in the fire.

Strong. Do you remember what they were pictures of?

Dor. [*nods her head*]. You were telling me the love stories of your people, and showing me each scene in the embers. And I was telling you how different it is with us in the East.

Strong. But we decided that, after all, love is love, whether it be in the East or in the West. [*Kneels in front of fire.*]

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Dor. But since then surely you have shown the pictures in the fire to some one else.

Strong. I have shown them to you. I do not wish to show them to another.

Dor. Somehow, whenever I am tired of the noise and rush of all this, I think of those great, silent mountains, smiling up at the sun, or showing to the dark, gray clouds a face as stern and grim as their own, but always peaceful.

Strong. You do not belong shut between four walls. You have the spirit of the forest. The voice of the stream tells the same story to you as to me. You understand the message the wind bears when it comes fresh and cool from the snows above.

Dor. Then I want to forget the nothings that form our life here and go out there—alone.

Strong. Not alone. There is always one in whose company the sunshine is brighter, the wind softer, and the peace greater? Miss Nelson—[*rises*]—when I told you what you had been to me, I kept back the greatest thing of all. You know my plans and hopes, but the greatest hope I have never told you, the hope of my love.

Dor. Your love?

Strong. And now I tell you of it, because it is *you* I love. I have waited for two years to tell you. From the moment you came into my life I knew that your love was the only thing in the world worth having. I am ambitious, I wish to raise my people, but even that seems small compared with the giant love you have awakened.

Dor. You love me?

Strong. The thought of you has guided me and has been my strength. And now I speak your tongue, I think your thoughts, and I love you with a love as great as my mountains and as pure as the air about them. Give me the right to tell you more of that love.

Dor. You love me?

Strong. If I am not what you would have me, let me go on working. Only tell me that it is for you.

Dor. Strongheart, I—— [*Rises and crosses to C.*] I cannot answer you now, I don't know, I don't know.

Strong. [*crossing to her*]. I will wait. You must be sure, for on your answer hangs the happiness of my life, and, I hope, of yours.

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Dor. [*turning to him*]. Come for your answer to-morrow.

Billy and Molly are the next to take advantage of the tête-à-tête corner.

Billy. You know I told you if you lost those signals, it would be down and out for mine?

Molly [*putting her hand to bodice where signals are*]. If I lost the signals?

Billy. Yes, I say "lost" because it's the kindest word to use.

Molly [*rising*]. Mr. Saunders, I *don't* understand a word you're saying, but I gather from your tone that you mean it to be rude.

Billy. No, I'm trying to put it gently, that is all.

Molly. Put what gently?

Billy. You might have known you'd have been found out.

Molly [*crossing to chair in front of fire, sits*]. When you get through with this interesting conversation, perhaps you'll tell me what you're talking about.

Billy. Well, it's just this. You sent those signals I gave you to Farley.

Molly [*rising, amazed, facing him*]. What?

Billy. There's only one thing can make a woman act that way, and that's—you know. [*Crosses to C.*] Why didn't you do the square thing by me and tell me he was *it?*

Molly [*going up toward R. 3*]. I have nothing to say to you, Mr. Saunders.

Billy. Then you might as well know the rest. [MOLLY *stops and turns to him.*] One of the team is going to be disgraced to-morrow on your account.

Molly [*crossing down*]. Why should he, if I am the criminal?

Billy. Because a man would rather be knocked out himself than give away a woman.

Molly [*coming to him—starting to cry*]. Why did you give them to me if you couldn't trust me?

Billy [*backing away*]. I did trust you. Oh, I was easy fruit. I'm not excusing myself, but you have queered an innocent man's life, and you've knocked out my faith in womanhood all right. Good-bye.

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Molly [*taking a step after him*]. What are you going to do?

Billy [*turning to her*]. There's nothing to be done. Strongheart has made me promise to keep my face shut. Oh, it's only another poor fool added to the list of the men who have trusted women.

He leaves her abruptly. She starts after him with hands outstretched and then sinks in a chair and begins to cry. Strongheart finds her sobbing and draws out the story of her trouble. She is afraid that Billy is going to be disgraced for having given her the signals, but she has not lost them at all. She gives them to Strongheart. He can assure her that no disgrace will come to Billy, or to any innocent man, and wants to send Billy to her. She declares that she will never speak to him again. He has suspected her of treachery.

Strongheart has learned that Thorne was in Dick's room and had a chance to exchange the list of signals that Dick wrote for another, and in order to get a sample of Thorne's handwriting he has Billy dictate a telegram to Thorne, his own hand being disabled. Armed with this document, Strongheart confronts Thorne. He shows him first the list of signals that he got from Molly and asks if they are not in his handwriting. Thorne starts slightly upon seeing the list, but denies flatly that he wrote it.

Strong. Do not lie to me, Thorne, it will not help you now.

Thorne [*indifferently*]. Oh, you seem to think it is in my writing. [*Crosses to R. C.*] Well, it's really of very little importance to me what you think.

Strong. It may become of more importance when I give these two papers to the meeting to-morrow?

Thorne [*sharply, turning*]. What two papers?

Strong. This list of signals and this telegram which three people saw you write, and which contains the words end, left, right, rush, back, and half. The words are identical with those in the list, and prove the two papers to have been written by the same hand. Thorne, you sent Dick's list to Farley, and I can prove it. [THORNE *turns, throws his cigar in fire, and makes a start for* STRONG. STRONG *stops him with his voice.*] So, I tell you now, that

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to-morrow afternoon I shall show the team that you are a blackguard.

Thorne [*crossing to him*]. Look here, you're interfering too much in my affairs. If you give me away I'll show Frank and Dick how you have betrayed their confidence.

Strong. In what way?

Thorne. By making love to Frank's sister.

Strong. We will not use a lady's name in this discussion.

Thorne. Well, whether we use her name or not, you know I'm right. I've watched you.

Strong. Well?

Thorne. If you clear Dick's name to-morrow, you help your rival.

Strong. [*surprised*]. Dick my rival?

Thorne. Come, you can't make me believe you didn't know that.

Strong. If Dick is the man she loves, she will choose him.

Thorne. But if you are the man she loves, they will prevent you marrying her.

Strong. Why?

Thorne. Because you are an Indian! [STRONGHEART *moves a step to the L., thinking this remark absurd.*] If those boys knew you'd made love to her, they'd kick you out of this house.

Strong. [*facing* THORNE]. You lie!

Thorne. You think they are your friends? [*Points to window.*] Stand behind that curtain and see what they will do when I tell them.

Strong. [*going to him*]. Thorne, you are a coward.

Thorne. It is you who are afraid, because you know in your heart that what I say is true.

Strong. We shall see.

Strongheart calls Frank and Dick. He tells them that he has been charged with betraying Frank's confidence by loving his sister, but that he has loved her for two years and for her adopted the manners and customs of Frank's people. If she will accept his love he will ask Frank's consent.

Dick. You have dared to make love to her?

Strong. Why should I not?

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Dick. Because you are an Indian.

Thorne. You see?

Frank. Strongheart, you are one of the finest men I know, but you are not one of us.

Strong. Neither is a European, yet you would give your sister to one of them.

Frank. It is not the same thing.

Strong. No, I have a greater claim. I am *the* American. I speak your tongue, I obey your law, I have lived with you, slept with you, eaten from the same dish, and yet I am not one of you.

Dick. You are not one of us in race! We trusted you with our women, but when you spoke your love you betrayed that trust. You——

Frank. Wait, Dick. Not so fast.

Strong. No, let him speak. It is time we understood one another. You called me friend, there was no question of race. I have the same education as you, the same customs, the same feelings.

Dick. Still, you are an Indian!

Strong. You do well to remind me of that. You have taken from me the land of my fathers, and yet when I live by your laws will not call me brother. I am Soangataha, the son of a chief. In what way am I not your equal?

Frank. I tell you to keep away from my sister.

Strong. No. I will try to win her without your consent.

Dick. Now you show the treachery of your race. You make love to our women—and it was you who betrayed the team.

Strong. What? you dare say that?

Dick. Yes, I dare. If you can be unfaithful in the one case you can in the other.

Strong. Do you mean that?

Dick. Show me those signals.

Strong. You force me to fight. Good. [*Takes out signals.*] There are the signals we got from Farley.

[DICK *takes them and crosses to L. C.* FRANK *comes down from door and looks at list with him.*]

Dick [*astonished*]. My God, Frank, the writing's mine.

Strong. It is not my honor, but yours, that is in danger. Now vindicate it yourself.

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Dick [*turning to him*]. Then *you* sent this to Farley?

Strong. You will have to prove that to-morrow.

Frank. Now you're showing what you are. I was a fool to bring you into my house.

Strong. You have reminded me to-night that I am an Indian. Good. An Indian knows how to avenge himself.

Dick [*crossing down L.*]. Yes, on those who took him into their homes!

Strong. I was an Indian when you took me! I will not sacrifice my life to your prejudice, I will take my answer from her.

[FRANK *bars his way.*]

Frank. Strongheart, this is my house. I forbid you seeing my sister!

Strong. You have not the right. It is for her to decide. If she will accept my love, it is not for you to forbid it.

Dick [*crossing down*]. Have you no sense of honor?

Strong. [*coming down*]. It is you who are false to me, as your race has been false to mine. You have robbed us of all we had, but you shall not take from me the right to love!

Dick. You shall not speak of love to her!

Strong. Do you think you can stop me? No! I will speak now!

[*Starts for door. Enter* DOROTHY.]

Frank. If you dare say another word to my sister——

Dor. [*coming down a step*]. Why, boys, what is the matter?

Strong. Miss Nelson, when I told you of my love you asked me to wait, but you did let me hope.

Frank. Strongheart, leave my house!

Dor. For shame, Frank. [*Down another step.*]

Strong. Miss Nelson, what is your answer?

Dick. Dorothy, you don't understand!

Strong. She does understand your injustice. She knows it was you who called me from among my mountains to be one of you. I was happy there. You showed me the great life beyond, and now you bid me keep back. You tell me that I may not share it, but must stand outside, because I am an Indian. No. I will not do it!

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[DOROTHY *starts to cross to him, but* FRANK *stops her by taking her arm.*]

Frank. Strongheart!

Dick. Dorothy!

Strong. I will come for my answer to-morrow.

It is an embarrassing moment for Billy the next afternoon when he meets Molly in the Nelsons' library. He begs her pardon humbly, stating his conviction that he is an ass. She tells him it is not an easy thing to forgive being called a traitor to your team. He is well aware of that, and assures her that if any other chap had said as much to her he, Billy, would have done a two step on that chap's solar plexus.

Molly [*not turning to him*]. But why did you jump at once to the conclusion that I had sent those signals?

Billy. Maybe it was because I haven't been thinking of any one except you for months. Why, things got so bad that I used to have nightmares and dream about you. [MOLLY *moves a step to the R., laughing quietly.*] Don't laugh, I really mean it. And unless you forgive me now, I'll do something desperate.

Molly [*slowly*]. Well, if you're really very sorry, I suppose I'll have to forgive you this time.

Billy. You will? [*Extends his hand.*]

Molly. Yes! [*Turns to him quickly and takes his hand and gives it a strong shake, causing him to make a grimace of pain.*] Oh, I forgot your arm. I'm afraid I hurt you.

Billy [*hopefully*]. Would you care if you did?

Molly [*softly*]. I'm afraid I would.

Billy [*putting his arm around her*]. Molly!

Molly [*putting her arms around his neck*]. Billy!

As they embrace Dick enters. He slams the door. The noise startles Molly. She gives a low scream and runs out. Billy looks after her and then turns and sees Dick. He gives a start of surprise and tries to cover his confusion with talk. Dick is too old a chum to be put off with inconsequential chatter, so Billy says "it's all fixed." A further question making him realize that he has not asked Molly to be his wife, he goes after her on the run.

The team now assemble to face the disagreeable task of trying to find out who sent the signals to their opponents.

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Thorne. Then, first, we must know in whose handwriting the list was.

Taylor. Strongheart's.

One of the Men. The Indian's.

Dick. No, boys. Frank has the list and the writing's mine.

[MEN *all give a start and say: "What!"*]

Taylor. I don't believe it, Dick.

Frank. Yes, that's right. Billy recognized it, and so did I.

Dick [*rising and crossing down L. C., facing up stage*]. I've tried to think it out, boys. But I am as much in the dark as you are. The list is mine, and I can't explain how it came into Farley's hands.

Thorne [*rising*]. Boys, in a matter like this, personal friendship must be sacrificed to justice. If Dick has no explanation to offer there is only one thing for us to do.

Dick. I have no explanation.

Thorne. Then you'll have to——

Strong. [*from down in front of fire*]. Thorne!

Thorne [*crossing down to him quickly*]. For God's sake, Strongheart, have you forgotten what he said yesterday?

Strong. No. But I had almost forgotten how the son of a chief must act. [*Hands telegram* THORNE *wrote to* FRANK.] There is the proof of Dick's innocence.

Strongheart tells them squarely it was Thorne who sent the signals. Billy lays emphasis on the point that Thorne tried to lay the blame on Dick. Thorne starts to go out, saying they can get the details from the Indian, but Taylor blocks his way. All the men advance a step threateningly. Strongheart counsels them to let the culprit go, as he can never show his face in college again. The men step back and Thorne goes out slowly.

When the men have left Dick begs Strongheart's pardon for what he said the night before. Yet he will not take it all back. Something stronger than either of them has come between them; they cannot be friends.

In telling Billy of Dick's words, Strongheart says the knife of prejudice has cut the ties of friendship. Billy declares he is ashamed of his race. One woman's love, Strongheart replies, can wipe out all the injustice. Billy has gone to speak his mind to Dick and Frank.

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Dorothy is ready to give Strongheart his answer. She has looked well into her heart and is ready to go with him. The butler comes in to tell Strongheart that there is a man there who says he is a messenger from his people. Black Eagle, an old Indian, comes forward. He is dressed in a blue sack suit and mocassins, and his long black hair falls under the collar of his flannel shirt. He looks at Dorothy. They have no women in their councils, he says. She leaves them.

Black Eagle. Old chief, your father, dead. [STRONGHEART *gives a start and lets his head sink down.*] You chief! [STRONGHEART *raises his head and folds his arms.*] You go with me, see Great Father at Washington. Then to our people.

Strong. I will come, and not alone. [*Points R.*] Black Eagle, I love her. She will come with me.

B. E. Is there no woman of our people that you want white woman?

Strong. This is the woman I love.

B. E. No. She not one of us. Can she live in our tepees? Can she eat what we eat? Can she share the life of our people? No. She white woman. She stay here.

Strong. But she will help us.

B. E. No. It not good. She child of white man. Your people not take her.

Strong. Then they are not my people. If they will not honor the woman I love, I will leave them. [*Crosses to table in front of chair L.*]

B. E. Where will you go? [*Extends his arms wide.* STRONGHEART *turns and looks at him and then sinks down in the chair, beaten.*] You leave them, but they always be your people. They sent you to white man to learn his wisdom.

Strong. And I have only learned to love. [*Rises.*] I cannot give up that love! [*Crosses down R.*]

B. E. [*trying to work on his sympathy*]. Winter snow soon be on land of your people. They poor. They cold.

Strong. Then let them accept her who will help them.

B. E. [*his voice full of hate*]. No. She white. Her people make us suffer.

Strong. The white men have been false to me, but I thought my own would be true.

B. E. We true to you when we say no. Children of

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chief must not be—— [STRONGHEART *stops him with a gesture.*] You come with me. You come alone.

Strong. [*crossing to him, making a last stand*]. What right have you——

B. E. They poor. But they pay for your wisdom. It belong to them!

Strong. Then——

B. E. You must choose!

Strong. [*turning to R., after a struggle*]. My love!

B. E. Your people. [STRONGHEART *turns to him.*] They crouch over their fires, waiting, waiting.

STRONGHEART *struggles fiercely within himself, crosses down R. and finally turns to* BLACK EAGLE *and points to the door.*]

Strong. Go! I will come!

[BLACK EAGLE *draws himself up and goes out slowly.* DOROTHY *enters. She comes down on* STRONGHEART'S *L. and stands looking at him. He raises his head.*]

Dor. I have heard.

Strong. Then you realize what it means? My eyes have been blind to all but love. I saw only the sunshine, thought only of happiness. I forgot the winter's cold, the squalid misery of my tribe. I could not take you to that, forgive me for asking you, I had no right to think of love. [*She makes a move toward him.*] I have been dreaming a beautiful dream, but I am awake at last.

Dor. Whatever your life may be, let me share it, for I love you.

Strong. And I love you too much to take you from your people and lead you to the hardships of mine.

Dor. You have made me love you. You cannot leave me now. You cannot.

Strong. Oh, that my life were mine to give you.

Dor. I give you mine. Take it.

Strong. I must keep faith with them.

Dor. [*turning and sinking in chair R. of table*]. Oh, I need you more than they.

Strong. [*crossing to her*]. Out of their poverty, their need, they have educated me to be their chief. No one can take my place. My life belongs to them and they demand it. I must go back to them. I must go alone.

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Dor. [*slowly*]. And I can only help you by giving you to them?

Strong. Yes. Honor demands it.

Dor. [*rising slowly and moving to C. of table. She speaks with firmness*]. Then, go to them. You must do your life work alone. But always remember—[*crosses to him*]—I love you, I love you.

Strong. And I, ah, if I told you how I love you, I would not have the strength to give you up.

Dor. [*up to him*]. Strongheart!

Strong. Oh, my love, my love, I go to them while I have the courage to do what is right. It is the law of races.

Dor. It is a cruel law.

Strong. Good-bye. [*She turns slowly and starts to go. He holds her hand as far as he can reach, and as she gets by the table she gives a deep heart-breaking sob, and then controlling herself goes up to the door. As she reaches it he says*]: Good-bye, my love. [*She goes out sobbing.*]

Strong. [*turning and raising his arms and face upward*]. Oh, great spirit of my fathers, I call to you for help, for I am in the midst of a great desert alone.

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THE TRUTH*

By Clyde Fitch

First played in Cleveland, Ohio, in October, 1906.

Argument: Becky Warder, a young married woman, who is in the habit of lying automatically for self-gratification and convenience, is carrying on what she considers an innocent and merely amusing flirtation. Questioned by her husband about the "affair," she is led into a mass of lies that arouse his gravest suspicion, and he declares that he will no longer live with her. Will she win him back, and will she be cured of her dangerous habit?

The Warders' drawing-room is a very attractive room in the best of taste, having among the decorations a couple of eighteenth century French portraits. A smart, good-looking manservant shows in Mrs. Lindon and Laura Fraser. Mrs. Lindon is a handsome, nervous, over-strung woman of about thirty-four, very fashionably dressed. Miss Fraser is very matter of fact, and has a rather commonplace type of good humor. The servant informs them that Mrs. Warder was lunching out. Mrs. Lindon says she will wait until half-past five.

In Miss Fraser's opinion Mrs. Lindon should have waited to think over information that she has received, and to calm herself a little before coming to see Mrs. Warder. Mrs. Lindon thinks that the circumstances require prompt action. She went to Becky, as she calls Mrs. Warder, in hysterics and begged her to make it up for her with her husband. She told Becky that she loved Fred in spite of his faults, and then what Becky did was to flirt with Fred behind her back.

Laura reminds her that Becky loves her own husband, but Mrs. Lindon says Becky always liked having men fond

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of her, and leads them on till they lose their heads, when she gets frightened and feels insulted. She declares that she would give anything to throw Fred off for good, but that she can't stop being in love with him. When Becky comes, she says, she is going to give her one more chance to tell the truth and say when she saw Fred last. That is all that will keep her from going to Mr. Warder.

While they are talking Mrs. Warder returns home accompanied by a man, and the ladies run into the next room to look out the window and see if it is Fred. A servant shows in Becky and Fred Lindon. Becky is a pretty, charming, volatile young woman, dressed ultra smartly. Lindon is dapper, rather good looking, though not particularly strong in character, and full of a certain personal charm. The servant says that Mrs. Lindon and Miss Fraser were waiting but must have gone. Becky is rather nervous. She tells Mr. Lindon that she brought him home with her to convince him that his estrangement from his wife has gone on long enough.

Lindon. I like *that* from *you.*

Becky. I mean it, and if she wants you back, you've got to go.

Lindon. Well, let me get a cocktail first.

Becky. I am serious.

Lin. So'll I be if Eve comes in and catches me. [*Going.*]

Becky [*going with him*]. I'll let you out—but I expect you here again in half an hour. Do you understand? You are to come back at six. [*They go out.*]

Mrs. Lindon and Miss Fraser come back into the room. Mrs. Lindon, with a tigerish cry of rage, says that Becky is a wretched little beast. Becky returns, sees them with a start of surprise, and then beams. They explain that they waited in the next room until she was alone. She gathers that they don't know that Fred was there, and says promptly that she came home alone and has been playing bridge since luncheon. Mrs. Lindon asks where.

Becky. Clara Ford's, our usual four. [LAURA *and* EVE *exchange glances.*]

Mrs. Lindon. Why! I saw her lunching at Sherry's.

Becky [*quickly after only a second's hesitation*]. Yes, she couldn't play to-day, but it was her turn at her house, so we went all the same—and—er—er—Bell Prescott took

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her place. [*Another surreptitious look passes between* LAURA *and* MRS. LINDON.]

Laura. Did you win?

Becky. Yes, one hundred and fifty.

Laura. One hundred and fifty? Good!

Mrs. Lindon comes to the object of her visit, but Becky warns her that if she starts a suit for separation Fred will probably be furious and accept her bluff seriously. She says that she changed her mind about seeing Fred, because she thought it wouldn't do any good. To have the reconciliation mean anything she thinks Fred must ask for her from his own choice. He must go to Eve because he misses her and wants her back. She says, moreover, that she doesn't believe that Fred is interested in another woman.

Mrs. Lindon finally, very much provoked, says that she made a very serious mistake in coming to Becky of all women. The situation is shaping for a downright row when the arrival of Warder gives them pause. Warder is a strong and sensible man, with no nerves and no "temperament." There is nothing subtle about him. He is straightforward and lovable. Becky secretly writes a few words on a piece of paper at a desk and slips it into Warder's hand.

Warder was thinking of going around to the club until dinner, but Mrs. Lindon asks him to give her a half hour. He has looked at the note and is a little embarrassed, so he reads it out loud, "Get rid of Eve. I want the room." Mrs. Lindon informs him at once that she knows Becky has an appointment there at six with her husband. She says that Becky and Fred meet every single day.

Warder replies that he shouldn't think of embarrassing his wife by waiting. He thinks, however, that Mrs. Lindon has been misinformed about the daily meetings. As he is going out Mrs. Lindon asks him to walk along with her and let her speak plainly to him. For a moment Mrs. Lindon is left alone in the room with Miss Fraser and tells her that she has had Fred watched by private detectives for over a month. She has a list of dates and places of his meetings with Becky. When Mrs. Lindon has gone with Warder, Miss Fraser remonstrates with Becky for not being frank.

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Becky. It's false! I never told a malicious lie in my life. I never told a fib that hurt any one but myself!

Laura. Tell Eve the truth. Make her have confidence in you. She says if you cross the ferry to Jersey City, you say you've been abroad.

Becky [*laughing*]. Well, so I *have!* Laura! I'm doing my best to make Eve happy. I can't do any more than my best, and if I do it at all, I must do it my own way!

Laura. You've seen Fred to-day.

Becky. No, I haven't.

Laura. Becky! He came home with you just now!

Becky. What makes you think so?

Laura. I saw his back on the steps with you.

Becky. Oh, I see—spying on me? Well, you made a mistake in the back.

Laura. I know it was Fred Lindon.

Becky. And I know it wasn't.

Laura. You're not seeing him every day?

Becky. Certainly not! But what affair is it of yours, if I do?

Laura. We're all friends, and you're making Eve wildly jealous.

Becky. That is entirely her own fault, not mine.

The servant comes in with bandbox and a bill which Becky is not ready to pay. Miss Fraser reminds her of the one hundred and fifty dollars that she has just won at bridge, but she says Miss Fraser has misunderstood her; she lost one hundred and fifty dollars. Miss Fraser is very positive that she did not misunderstand her, and Becky explains that she merely said that she had won because she did not want Eve to think that she had lost.

Becky. I never can bear to own up I've lost anything before Eve. [*Laughs, pulls* LAURA *by the arm.*] Goodbye.

Laura. I won't go yet.

Becky. You must. I have an engagement.

Laura. With Fred Lindon.

Becky denies it, but the words are hardly out of her mouth when the servant announces Mr. Lindon.

Miss Fraser, going out, pretends not to see Becky's hand. Becky is disturbed to think that Miss Fraser and Mrs. Lindon both saw Fred come to the house with her

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earlier, but he regards the matter very lightly and is not disturbed even when she says his wife knows they have been meeting every day.

Becky. You love her, Fred?

Lin. [*casually*]. No, I love you!

Becky. Nonsense! I mean really! Promise me you'll go to Eve to-morrow and ask her to come back.

Lin. [*slides down on to sofa*]. Not yet—give me another month!

Becky. You'll lose her!

Lin. No, there are certain things you can't lose—try as hard as you like!

Becky. That isn't funny.

At last she begins to try to persuade Fred that his own happiness lies in his return to Eve. To his chagrin she says that the encouragement she has given him means nothing. She likes to have men fond of her and regards it as a compliment to her husband.

The price of her friendship, Becky says, is his peace with Eve! If he makes up with his wife he may come to see her. He accepts the conditions, but insists upon coming to see her the next day. If she ever sends him away for good, he says, in a day or two she'll call him back again, because she likes him better than she thinks. Warder comes in while they are talking. He looks from one to the other, and then speaks to Lindon pleasantly. There are several awkward pauses in their conversation before Lindon goes.

The servant brings in a letter to Becky. She is surprised to find that it is from her father, and does not see why he should want money as she sent him his allowance at the beginning of the month, and her husband has recently sent him an extra three hundred dollars. Warder thinks that her father must have been playing the races again. He refuses to send any more. Then he asks Becky if it is true that she has been seeing Lindon every day. She denies it and attempts to revert to her father's troubles. Warder says that is an old story, but there is something new. Eve is jealous of her.

When she has met Lindon, she explains, it was entirely with the desire to reconcile him and Eve. Her husband assures her that he has every confidence in her and her

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motives, but he has none in Lindon's, and does not wish to have her see him again. Then he asks her to own up that Lindon has been trying to make love to her. She denies it flatly, looking him straight in the face.

Warder. Not a bit?

Becky [*smiling*]. Well—maybe—just a tiny bit—but not in earnest.

Ward. [*rising, angrily*]. I was sure of it! The damn puppy! Becky, I've heard him swear there's no such thing as a decent woman if a man goes about it in the right way!

Becky. Oh, you men are always hard on another man whom women like.

Ward. I know what I'm talking about *this* time, and you don't.

Becky [*with dignity*]. I judge by his behavior to me. He may have led me to believe he likes me very much—he ought to like me, I've been very nice to him—and I suppose it flattered me—[*smiling*]—it always does flatter me when men like me—and I think one feeling I have is pride that you have a wife whom other men admire! If Mr. Lindon has made—er—respectful love to me, that's a compliment to *you!* [WARDER *laughs, sincerely amused.*] But he has *not* insulted me.

Ward. [*smiling*]. That's your fault. You are the kind of woman he doesn't believe exists, and he can't make up his mind just what tactics to adopt.

He assures her that Lindon is incapable of appreciating her philanthropic desire to reconcile him to Eve, and that without knowing it she has been playing a dangerous and very foolish game. Already some one believes she has been seeing Lindon every day, he says, and although she has not that does not make any difference, for if she goes on seeing him at all every one will soon believe that she has been seeing him twice a day. She assures him that she has not made an appointment with Lindon for the next day.

If she should send for Lindon again, he warns her, Lindon will consider it a signal of capitulation, and ten to one will take her in his arms and kiss her. She replies that he would not dare. That Lindon's attentions to a man's wife are an insult, Warder does know, and as her husband he won't have it.

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Becky reverts again to her father's requirements. Warder declares the time has come when they must put a stop to his inveterate, indiscriminate gambling. If they don't teach him the lesson he needs, before they know it he will be in real trouble that ten thousand times fifty dollars might not get him out of. It is hard for him to refuse her but she must trust his judgment. Nevertheless, she gets him to give her $50 for the new hat, returns the hat and sends the money to her father. Then she calls up Lindon and breaks the engagement for the next day.

Two days later, Saturday afternoon, Mrs. Lindon comes to see Warder to inform him that she has only hinted at half the truth. He tells her that he asked Becky outright about what she had said, and that Becky denied practically all of it.

Mrs. L. You can't make me believe you've lived as long as you have with Becky Roland and not found out—she lies.

Ward. [*rises quickly in anger*]. It is because you're a woman you dare say that to me, but you know I don't have to listen to you, so don't push our old friendship's claim too far.

Mrs. L. I said Becky and Fred met often on the sly.

Ward. [*sitting again*]. Which isn't true!

Mrs. L. No! They meet *every day!*

Ward. Eve, I think your trouble has gone to your brain.

When they had their talk the other day, she says, Becky and Fred had already agreed that he was to go through a form of reconciliation for appearance' sake and continue his meetings with Becky. She says, too, that Becky had an appointment with Fred for the day before. Warder is absolutely unconvinced. Rising and turning away, a little ashamed, Mrs. Lindon adds that she has had Fred watched for weeks. Finally, she yielded to the impulse to ask Fred to come home, and he turned on her like a wolf, saying that she had meddled with his affairs once too often as she had frightened Becky into breaking off with him. He blamed her also for rousing Warder's suspicions, and for giving the whole thing away to everybody. Then he said he would break off his relations with her forever.

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Mrs. Lindon sinks down in a chair, burying her face in her hands and sobs. Warder, forgetting himself, exclaims that he does not see how she can still care for Fred after everything that she has gone through. She continues her woful complaint with a choking voice. He tells her that now she has relieved her mind, that she will be willing to forgive Fred again to-morrow.

Warder assures her that he would take Becky's unspoken denial against Fred's sworn statement any day. He will not listen to her any further. He says he is the last person she should have come to, and asks if she dreams what it would mean to him to shake his confidence in his wife. He understands perhaps how Fred Lindon must have found her ideas of devotion at times over the endurance line.

It was Mrs. Lindon's idea that if Warder knew everything they could arrange some way to separate Becky and Fred. She has incombatible proofs, and if Becky attempts to deny them she will go straight to the divorce court. Mrs. Lindon places the batch of detective reports on the table with a blow. Warder takes her hand almost cruelly and speaks strongly, with the manner of a man who is and means to remain master. He says he is afraid she is one of those dangerous well-meaning persons who do more harm than people who are purposely malicious.

Becky comes in with a certain air of bravado. Warder tells her that Mrs. Lindon has convinced herself of some very wrong things, but he prefers to be convinced of the contrary by her. Mrs. Lindon pushes her papers nearer to him as he tells his wife that, according to Mrs. Lindon, she has been seeing Fred every day. She asks if he wants her to deny it. She says the accusation and the idea behind it are absurd. She declares that Eve will become morbid over her trouble.

Ward. But is this true, Becky?

Becky [*to gain time*]. Is what true?

Ward. About this appointment with Fred which you broke over the——

Becky [*interrupting*]. Of course not!

Ward. [*who begins to doubt her*]. If it were, you could easily explain it, I'm sure. [*Hoping to suggest this course to her.*]

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Becky [*her head lost*]. Of course—but there's nothing to explain! The whole thing's false! What do you take me for, Eve? If you think I'm a home destroyer, you've made a mistake in the bird! And what do you mean by coming into my precious home and trying to make trouble for me?

Becky is frightened and almost in tears. Warder asks Mrs. Lindon to go. She informs him that the papers she is leaving are most valuable to her, and that he must promise not to let them out of his hands.

As soon as Mrs. Lindon is gone Warder makes Becky look straight into his eyes, cautioning her to be careful, and says he has not a suspicious nature and has the deepest confidence in her, but if his confidence was once shaken God knows he would never get it back. She puts her arms around his neck and assures him that she loves only him and never has and never could love Fred Lindon. But, he asks, if he finds her word is broken in one thing how can he ever trust it in another. He asks her to tell him the truth, which she did not tell him when she said she had not met Lindon often.

Becky [*turns away*]. It was the truth. I haven't—so very often.

Ward. Not every day?

Becky [*sits in the chair by the writing-table*]. How could I?

Ward. Nor telephoned him Thursday, breaking off an engagement *after you told me absolutely you'd parted with him for good—and had no appointment?*

Becky. Of course not! The idea! [*But she shows she is a little worried.*] Eve Lindon never could tell the truth!

Ward. The telephone girl must have lied, too, or else the statement was made out of whole cloth. [*Throwing the envelope on the desk.*]

Becky. What statement?

Ward. [*sitting on sofa*]. From these detectives.

He remarks that the papers make out a case of daily meetings between her and Fred. She exclaims that it is not true, and declares that Eve is capable of making a most terrific scandal for nothing. She teases him to tear up the papers, or to let her take them without noticing it until it is too late.

Ward. You heard me give Eve my word?

Becky. To a mad woman like that it doesn't count.

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Ward. I wonder just how much your word does count with you, Becky!

Becky [*with great and injured dignity*]. It counts everything!

Becoming more serious, he tells her that Lindon has sworn never to see his wife again because she came between him and Becky. Becky exclaims that she doesn't believe he said any such thing, and repeats her excuse that she is trying to bring Fred and Eve together.

Becky. If you believe those papers about him, then you must believe them about me.

Ward. [*coming to her*]. Heaven forbid, Becky! They would prove you a liar and a terrible one—which you're *not, are you?*

Becky. How can you ask?

Ward. If these were true—if I thought you had deceived me to such an extent—I could never trust you again so long as I lived, Becky.

Warder means to see Eve again and perhaps get hold of the detectives themselves. Becky, almost trembling with dread, tells him to go and get some exercise or else he will be believing these beastly things. It is now three o'clock and he does not expect to return before six. When he has gone Becky vows she will never tell another lie as long as she lives. Then deciding that Fred must save her, she writes a note asking him to come over. Just as she is finishing it her father enters.

Mr. Roland is an elderly, dried-up little man with an air of the dandy jockey still clinging to him underneath his gray hairs and dyed moustache. A vivid carnation is in his buttonhole. His gait has a somewhat rusty springiness. He explains that he can only stay a few minutes and asks for a glass of brandy. The coffee he took on the train poisoned him, he says. Then he takes Becky to task for sending him only fifty dollars when it was five hundred dollars that he wanted. The servant who brings in the brandy loiters in order to overhear as much of the conversation as possible, and Roland takes advantage of his presence to have his glass refilled several times. The fact is, he says, he has not paid his board bill regularly, and if he cannot have the five hundred dollars he will have to marry the landlady.

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When the messenger boy comes in for Mrs. Warder's note, Roland takes advantage of the opportunity to fill his pockets with cigars from the box on the table. He goes on with his story. He has been obliged at times by desperate need of ready money to suggest to Mrs. Crespigny, his landlady, certain things as probabilities which were barely remote possibilities, and unfortunately, once or twice in writing. If Becky will make Tom give him the money, he will promise not to be such a fool again.

Mrs. Crespigny is announced. She has pursued Mr. Roland from Baltimore, and comes in flamboyantly, a woman past the age of uncertainty, dressed gaudily, with an hour-glass figure. She is brightly rouged, and yet the very failure of the façade reveals somehow the honest interior of a human if forlornly foolish female. She wants Mrs. Warder to know the facts as between Mr. Roland and herself. Mr. Roland, she asserts, with all his superfine qualities, is a liar. She sinks into a chair in tears. She denies that their quarrel has anything to do with the rent, but says it is all a question of horses.

Mrs. Warder goes out for a moment, and Mrs. Crespigny accuses Roland of picturing her to his daughter as a grasping harpy, whereas the truth is he owes her at least five times five hundred dollars with his borrowings and his losses at cards. She says she has often lost to him on purpose, because she is ashamed to have him owe her any more money. She almost breaks down again and powders her nose. Roland says that he wants the money to take advantage of a tip expressly so that he can pay her.

Mrs. Crespigny. Yes, and then go board somewhere else? Is that your idea? Or to stay here?

Roland. Well, my daughter and her husband want me. [*Leaning on the mantel.*] They say their home is my home.

Mrs. C. [*going toward him, alarmed*]. But you won't stay, will you? I left word with Josephine to have your favorite meenoo cooked for a late supper in case you'd come back. We'll have a game to-night. I'll play you a rubber for the five hundred—it's against my conscience to give it to you outright for horse-racing.

Rol. *Loan* it to me!

Mrs. C. Yes, of course! I always mean loan. Oh,

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the flat'd be just too dreadful lonesome without you! Say you'll come back! Quick, before Mis' Warder comes in! Won't you?

Rol. [*coming toward her*]. Well, if you make it a personal favor to you in this way, I can't exactly refuse! And that ends the most serious quarrel we've had yet.

Mrs. C. [*embarrassedly*]. If we was man and wife, there wouldn't be any need of such quarrels. The money'd be yours then to do as you liked with.

Roland says she mustn't tempt him. She is much too kind to him as it is. Warder comes in and Roland gets rid of Mrs. Crespigny, whom he promises to meet at the railway station. He thanks Warder for the fifty dollars but says he wanted five hundred, and digs Warder in the ribs. He hums a song, dances a few steps, and says, "Nothing doing, I suppose?" There is not, and he departs.

The servant shows in Lindon. Warder disguises his thoughts and sends the servant to his room for a large blue envelope. He tells Lindon that Becky is out, but Lindon replies that he has just received a note from her asking him to come over. He shows it to Warder. The servant informs them that Mrs. Warder is in, and Warder leaves the room.

Lindon goes to the piano and begins to play, "Everything Comes to Him Who Waits." Becky hurries in and goes toward him quickly in great distress. Lindon, before she realizes what he is doing, has met her, taken her in his arms and kisses her. She forces herself away from him, standing for a moment speechless with rage and astonishment. Then she says slowly and deliberately that he has done exactly what Tom said he would do.

Lin. So you talked me all over with him, did you! Then why did you send for me to-day?

Becky. Because I was a fool, if you want the true reason!

Lin. My dear Becky——

Becky. Oh, you'll hear more and worse than that if you stay to listen! I advise you to go! You can't help me. I don't trust you. You might even make matters worse. It may have been all done purposely as it is.

Lin. Oh!

Becky. You see I'm ready to believe all I've heard of

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you, now that you've shown your true silly self to me in that one sickening moment, and I'd rather not be saved at all than be saved by you! [*She leans for a second against the corner of the writing-table.*]

Lin. How saved? From what?

She has only one thing more to say to him, but she wants that to ring in his ears as long as he remembers her. There is only one man she loves and that is Tom, and there is only one man in the world she despises, and that is him. She wishes she could cut out of her life every second she has spent with him. She has been a fool and he has been a cad. But she is thankful there are men in the world, real men, and her husband is one. Lastly, she declares that Eve is a fool not to jump at the chance of getting rid of him.

As soon as he has gone Becky calls up Mrs. Lindon. Miss Fraser answers the telephone and Becky asks her to come to see her and prevent a real catastrophe. Immediately after Warder comes back. Becky denies that Fred Lindon was there, but this time Warden cannot be deceived.

Becky. Well, I'll be honest, it *was* Fred Lindon!

Ward. [*anger getting the best of him*]. After everything—your word of honor, Eve's accusations, my absolute desire—you sent for him to come and see you!

Becky. No, no, you mustn't think that, Tom! He came of his own accord, of course—I suppose to see if I would see him! I didn't know it!

He leads her on through a tortuous explanation of why she saw Lindon. She didn't know it was he. Jenks said the gentleman gave no name. He watches her with a face growing harder and harder with each lie. She says that the moment she came into the room and saw who it was she excused herself and Lindon left.

Ward. [*in a voice not loud but full of anger and emotion*]. Lies! all of it! Every word a lie, and another and another and another!

Becky [*breathless with fright, gasping*]. Tom!

Ward. [*going to her*]. You sent for him! [*She is too frightened to speak, but she shakes her head in a last desperate effort at denial.*] Don't shake your head! I know what I'm talking about and for the first time with you, I be-

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lieve! [*She puts up her hands helplessly and backs away from him.*] I saw your note to him! [*She starts with a sense of anger added to her other emotions.*] I read it here, in this room; he gave it to me before you came down.

Becky. The beast!

Ward. [*with biting satire*]. *You're* going to misjudge him, too!

Becky. No, Tom, I'll tell you the truth and all of it!

Ward. Naturally, now you've *got to!*

Becky. No—wait! I did send for him—it was to tell him about those papers of Eve's.

Ward. Yes, you must plan your escape together!

Becky. No! because I still believed he was decent. I thought it was his duty, that he would claim it as his right, to prevent such a scandal as Eve threatened to make, which he knew I didn't deserve.

Ward. Hah!

She admits that she broke her promise and sent for him, but asks what else she could do. And he did what Warder said he would do, took her in his arms before she could stop him and kissed her. She bends over the chair on which she is leaning and sobs. Bitterly ironical, Warder says he supposes that she played the part of the shocked wife and ordered him out of the house. She declares that she did.

Ward. Do you think you can go on telling lies forever and I'll go on blindly believing them as I have for three years?

Becky. Even you couldn't have turned on him with more anger and disgust than I did!

Ward. I couldn't believe you if I wanted to! You've destroyed every breath of confidence in me!

Becky. It's the truth I'm telling you now!

Ward. In everything—everything that has come up since my eyes were first forced half open—you have told me a lie!

Becky. It's the truth! It's the truth!

Ward. [*continues, hardly hearing her*]. The money to your father, the first lie, and to-day made a double one! All this rotten evidence of Eve's—another dozen! Your promise that Lindon's visit Thursday should be his last, the next!

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Becky. I meant it then—I meant it truthfully.

Ignoring her interruption, he says that Lindon's visit led to a mass of lies. And then the truth! He kissed her. And then another lie and another dozen to try and save herself. In a hushed and frightened voice she swears by everything she holds dear that she has told the truth at last.

Ward. You don't know what's true when you hear it or when you speak it! I never could believe in you again! Never have confidence! How could I? Ask any man in the world and his answer would be the same!

He turns and goes away from her to control his anger, which threatens to get the best of him.

Becky [sobbing]. No, no, Tom! Don't! don't say that! You must believe in me! You must believe in me!

Ward. [after a pause, collects himself and comes to the writing-table]. Becky, you and I must say good-bye to each other. We must finish separately. *[A silence. She looks at him in dumb horror and surprise.]* Do you understand?

Becky [in a low voice]. No!

Ward. We must separate. Quietly—no fuss, no divorce unless you wish it. *[A pause, she does not answer. He goes toward her and repeats.]* No divorce unless you wish it.

Becky [with simple but deep pathos]. I love you.

Ward. You must stay on in the house for the present, till you can make your plans. That will help keep the thing quiet, too.

She asks if he really means what he is saying, and if he realizes what it must mean for her, for both of them. He replies that he does. He means to go to Boston for a few days. When he comes back she may have settled on something. She assures him that she will not stay a single day in the house without him. A woman with a breaking heart, whether she is right or wrong, cannot do things for the sake of appearances. She sinks into a chair, bursting into tears. Nothing she can say influences him. As he starts to go she cries out that she loves him and him only and him always. He goes out firmly.

Becky writes a note to tell Tom that she will not live in his house a single day without him. She will be waiting

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for him all the rest of her life, she concludes, if he can ever again believe.

Mr. Roland's rooms in Mrs. Crespigny's flat in Baltimore are a parlor and a bedroom, originally intended for a dining-room, connecting with it through an arch. The flat is a cheap one, and the decorations of the parlor are very ugly. Roland and Mrs. Crespigny are playing piquet. She is pursuing her perennial grievance when the bell rings. Becky enters carrying a handbag.

Roland asks her where in the world she has come from, what she has come for, and where she is stopping. He is aghast at her reply that she is going to visit him. He tells her she needn't take off her things. He is an old man and this sort of thing upsets him. Finally he asks her what she means by turning up there well toward midnight.

Becky explains that Tom has gone to San Francisco suddenly on business, so the idea came to her of making her father that visit that he had always been craving. She begs to be allowed to stay a couple of days, saying she can sleep on the sofa. A cat couldn't sleep on it, he replies, without chloroform.

She does not expect to sleep, but she has got to stay. His suspicions are aroused at this information, and he accuses her of not telling the truth. She has a look in her eyes when she is not telling the truth, a look that she gets from him. After a second's pause she bursts out with all the pent-up feelings which she has been trying to hide, and says she has left Tom and will never live with him again. He has deceived her.

For a time her father keeps on in the same strain as before: she must go back to her husband before it is too late for him to take her back; she must give Tom a chance to explain. At last he reads the real trouble in her face. He becomes sympathetic, but now he says she shall not repeat the mistake made by her mother and ruin both her own life and Tom's. He had always told her that he and her mother were an ideal couple.

Becky. If you had always told me the truth about everything, I think it would have saved me this night. I've about decided that the truth in everything is the best for everything in the end—if one could only learn to tell it.

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Rol. You must begin young, and you didn't.

Becky. By whose fault? [ROLAND *turns away from her, feeling the sting.*] Tell me now about you and mother.

Her mother accused him as she does Tom, he says, but it was not true of him.

Becky. I want to believe you, father, but I can't! You've just admitted you lied to me all my life about you and mother! Why should I believe you would suddenly turn around and tell me the truth now?

Rol. At last, one trait in you like your mother! Do all that I could, swear by everything she or I held holy, I couldn't persuade her I was telling the truth!

Becky. Perhaps you had already destroyed her confidence in you! You can do that, even with some one who loves you, in a day, in an hour, in even less.

If she puts off going back to Tom, he warns her, either Tom will let her go and help her get a divorce so that he can marry some other woman, or else he will grow hard and bitter against all women and the best years of a man's life will be brass in his mouth, thanks to her. She has got to go back to Tom to-night, he decides. He has money enough for her ticket. Still she persists that she cannot go. Suddenly she rises, desperate. Then her head sinks and she says almost in a whisper that she has not left Tom —it is Tom who has left her.

Rol. What do you say?

Becky. Tom has left me—now you know why I can't go back.

Rol. What for?

Becky. He called me what mother called you. He's lost confidence in me. He believes—there's some one else. [*She is in an agony of shame and grief.*]

Rol. No wonder you made me worm out the truth! I wouldn't have believed it of you, Becky! I wouldn't have believed it of you!

Becky [*frightened*]. But it isn't true, father!

Rol. Why didn't you tell me the right story in the beginning?

Becky [*aghast*]. Father! don't you believe me?

Rol. You denied it to him, I suppose?

Becky. Of course.

Rol. And he turned you out all the same?

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Becky. He didn't turn me out; he only refused to stay in the house with me. I came away.

Rol. Well, if your husband doesn't believe in you, how can you expect me to, who've known all your life you couldn't tell the truth?

Becky. Father, I've told you the truth now! For God's sake, believe me, for if *you* won't believe me, either, what will become of me?

Rol. I can help you better if you'll be honest with me. A man like Tom Warder isn't putting the wife he's been a slave to out of his life without good reason. [*He turns away from her.*]

Becky. You said you knew the look in my face when I lied, because it was your look. [*Goes to him and stands close, facing him.*] Look in my face now and tell me what you see there. [*She speaks very simply and clearly.*] I love Tom and only Tom, and never have loved any other man and have never been anything but faithful and true in my love for him. [ROLAND *stands silently looking into her face, still unconvinced.*] I stand with Tom exactly, father, where you stood the day mother left you——

[*His face begins to change. A knock on the door left.*]

Mrs. C. [*outside*]. If Mis' Warder wants to catch that train, I hear the car coming!

Becky [*breathlessly seizing hold of him with her two hands*]. Father!

Rol. Mrs. Warder's changed her mind. She's stopping here to-night. [*Putting his arms about her.*]

Becky. Father! [*Her tension gives way, and she lies limp in his arms, her slender body shaking with the emotion which now masters her.*]

The following Monday Becky and her father are having coffee together in his parlor. The room is in disorder. Roland is wearing a slovenly bathrobe. Becky complains that everything is horrid and messy. But he says she will get used to it, and before she knows it she will like things best this way. The outlook seems pretty dark to Roland, as Warder has not answered a telegram, and he stirs up Becky by threatening to marry Mrs. Crespigny.

Becky has determined to try as hard as she can not to tell

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even little lies to see if she can get into the habit of telling the truth, because she thinks he might come back. Her father is doing his best to make him, he assures her. He considers a telegram he sent a stroke of genius. It said, "Becky is dying. Come at once."

Becky does not consider the telegram a stroke of genius. As soon as Tom arrives he will find that she is not dying. Roland says that must not happen. His idea was that Tom would think she had tried to kill herself. His sympathies and remorse would be aroused; he would hurry on. But he has not come. He has not even telegraphed. Roland continues to plan, however, for Tom's reception. He says that Becky must be weak and ill, as if the doctor had just saved her. She refuses to act any such part, but her father insists that she cannot get out of it.

When Becky has gone out, Mrs. Crespigny has an interview with Roland who tells her that his allowance will stop and that he won't have a cent unless his daughter makes up with her husband. Mrs. Crespigny gets rather nervous as she asks him why one woman's money is not as good as another's for him to live on. He says appreciatively that she has come right to the point, but that nevertheless he is going to do his best to bring about a reconciliation, and, of course, if he does, their relations will remain unchanged. Mrs. Crespigny declares flatly that she would rather his daughter and son-in-law kept separate.

A telegram came early in the morning which Mrs. Crespigny forgot to give Roland. It is from Tom, saying that he is coming. Roland hastens to make the parlor look like a sickroom. A touch that Mrs. Crespigny thinks of is to put an orange on a plate on the table. She uses an artificial orange for the purpose. They have hardly finished their preparations when the bell rings. Roland tells Mrs. Crespigny that he will talk to Warder until Becky returns to the flat. Then she is to say that the doctor has gone and he will bring Becky in as if from her bedroom.

Rol. They'll be reconciled.

Mrs. C. *Our* marriage is as good as off then!

The bell rings again and he tells her not to keep Warder waiting. She goes, and the next moment Warder enters the room.

Ward. [*very serious*]. How is she, father?

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Rol. The doctor is with her now. Mrs. Crespigny will let me know when he's gone. I haven't let her know I telegraphed you.

Ward. But will she get well? Is she no worse?

Rol. We have every hope of her getting well.

Ward. [*he turns aside to control a sudden flood of emotion*]. Thank God!

Rol. I think a good deal now depends upon you. [WARDER *faces* ROLAND. ROLAND *goes to him.*] Are you ready to take my daughter back?

Ward. [*very quietly, soberly*]. Yes.

Rol. For good?

Ward. If I can only feel sure Becky will try—only *try* —to be straightforward and honest with me, that's all I ask. God knows what I've suffered these two days, and when your message came—oh, to have that on my shoulders, too—it would have been more than a man could bear!

Rol. Whatever Becky's faults may have been, you did her one terrible injustice!

Warder knows that now. He has paced his room or sat and gritted his teeth, hour after hour, until the anger died out of him and he began to see things clearly both ahead and behind him. Becky's last words, that she loved him, kept ringing in his ears, and they rang true. He wants to ask her to forgive him.

With a knock on the door, Mrs. Crespigny comes in, frightened at what she is going to do. Roland hesitates a moment, but his old habit reasserts itself. He asks if the doctor has gone, and excuses himself. Mrs. Crespigny makes several gasping efforts to speak, before she finally says she is going to do something awful. She wishes to tell him something he ought to know, about a lie, if he will promise not to betray the source of his information. He promises.

Mrs. C. [*whispers*]. She ain't sick!

Ward. Who?

Mrs. C. Mis' Warder! She ain't been sick—that was all a story to get you here!

Ward. [*catching her two hands by the wrists and holding them tight, so she can't get away from him*]. No! don't say that!

Mrs. C. Ssh! I will say it! It's true! The doctor

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wasn't here when you came! Mis' Warder was out and only came in when I knocked on the door just now.

She tells him to keep his eye open and judge for himself if he doesn't believe her. Then she snatches up the artificial orange, saying maybe he thinks that is the truth, and smashes it on the floor.

Ward. Let me go! I won't stay for this brutal farce!

Mrs. C. You promised to pertect me, and if you go now Mr. Roland'll catch on, and I want him to marry me! Now you know——

Ward. Was this his idea or hers?

Mrs. C. His, and she—— [*Listens.*]

Ward. [*eagerly*]. She what——

Mrs. C. [*moving away from the door*]. Ssh! they're here!

Warder controls himself and goes to the other side of the room. Roland comes, bringing Becky, who leans on him. Her eyes are down. Warder stands immovable and watches.

Rol. [*pointedly*]. Thank you, Mrs. Crespigny.

She goes out unwillingly. Becky looks up and sees Warder. He stands motionless, watching her.

Becky [*as she meets* WARDER'S *eyes, breaks away from* ROLAND]. No, father! I can't do it! I won't do it!

Rol. [*frightened*]. Becky!

Becky. No! I tell you it's only another lie and a revolting one!

Rol. You're ill. You don't know what you're saying!

Becky. No, I'm not ill, and you know it, and I haven't been! And if I can't win his love back by the truth, I'll never be able to keep it, so what's the use of getting it back at all? [*The tears fill her eyes and her throat.*]

Ward. Becky!

He wants to go to her, but still holds himself back. His face shows his joy, but neither Becky nor Roland see this.

Becky [*continues after a moment, pathetically*]. I thought I might creep back, through pity, first into your life, and then into your heart again. But, after all, I can't do it. [*She sits in the Morris chair, hopelessly.*] Something's happened to me in these two days—even if I tell lies, I've learned to loathe them and be afraid of them, and all the rest of my life I'll try——

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Ward. [*in a choked voice*]. Thank God!

He goes to her, almost in tears himself. Roland looks at Warder, and realizes what it means; a smile comes over his own face, and at the same time his eyes fill with his almost-forgotten tears.

Becky. You can't forgive me!

Ward. We don't love people because they are perfect.

He takes her two trembling hands in his, and she rises.

Becky. Tom!

Ward. We love them because they are themselves.

He takes her in his arms.

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THE NEW YORK IDEA*

By Langdon Mitchell

First played in New York at the Lyric Theatre on November 19, 1906.

Argument: Cynthia Karslake, a fifteen-million-dollar heiress, is about to marry a supreme court justice and member of the Four Hundred when she is much upset by a chance meeting with her first husband, a prominent racing man, whom she divorced and with whom she is still very much in love. She runs off to the race track and telegraphs to postpone the wedding. Will the match be broken off, and will Cynthia and her first husband be brought together again?

The marriage of Mr. Justice Philip Phillimore and Mrs. John Karslake, both divorcees, involves a number of nice social questions which are discussed at Phillimore's home in Washington Square by his mother, a refined and unintelligent woman and semi-professional invalid, his aunt, Miss Heneage, a solidly built, narrow-minded woman who commands her family connection on the strength of a large income, and his sister Grace, a pretty and fashionably dressed girl of twenty.

Mr. Sudley is announced. William Sudley is a little, oldish gentleman who is and appears thoroughly insignificant, but his opinion of the place he occupies in the world is enormous. He is the cousin of Judge Phillimore. He shakes hands with the ladies soberly and tells them of his winter in Cairo. It so happens that Philip's divorced wife, Vida Phillimore, was there, and went everywhere and did everything no woman should, as Sudley says.

When she heard of Philip's engagement she gave a din-

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ner in honor of it. Only divorcees were asked. She had a dummy at the head of the table that stood for Philip. Sudley also tells of a tableau at Lord Errington's where she "did" Cleopatra robed in some material so transparent that it appeared to be moonshine. The ladies are irritated and pained.

Mrs. Karslake is living at Philip's house at the invitation of Miss Heneage. Sudley learns that she was a Deane, and an heiress to fifteen or twenty millions. She is also what is called a "sporty" woman. Sudley is surprised to find that Philip should be marrying a woman who has been divorced, but they correct him. It was Cynthia Karslake who divorced her husband.

Miss Heneage. The suit went by default. And, my dear William, there are many palliating circumstances. Cynthia was married to Karslake only seven months. There are no—[*glances at* GRACE]—no hostages to Fortune! Ahem!

Sudley [*still unwilling to be pleased*]. Ah! What sort of a young woman is she?

[*Goes to C.*

Grace [*with the superiority of one who is not too popular*]. Men admire her.

Miss H. She's not conventional.

Mrs. Phillimore [*showing a faint sense of justice*]. I am bound to say she has behaved discreetly ever since she arrived in this house.

Miss H. Yes, Mary—but I sometimes suspect that she exercises a degree of self-control——

Sud. [*glad to have something against some one*]. She claps on the lid, eh? And you think that perhaps some day she'll boil over? Well, of course fifteen or twenty millions—but who's Karslake?

Grace [*very superciliously*]. He owns Cynthia K. She's the famous mare.

Miss H. He's Henry Karslake's son.

Sud. [*beginning to make the best of fifteen millions-in-law*]. Oh!—Henry!—Very respectable family. Although I remember his father served a term in the senate. And so the wedding is to be to-morrow!

Cynthia comes in reading a newspaper. She is a young creature in her twenties, small and high-bred, full of love of excitement and sport. Her manner is wideawake and

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keen and she is evidently in no fear of the opinion of others. Her dress is exceedingly elegant, but with the elegance of a woman whose chief interests lie in life out of doors. Unaware that she has come in, Sudley is saying that he thinks it will be well for him not to see the young woman, and that he supposes she is the uncouth modern young woman, eight feet high, with a skin like a rhinoceros and manners like a cave-dweller—and habitué of the race track and the divorce court.

The racing news is engrossing Cynthia's entire attention. In excitement she reads aloud part of the report. Sudley bows to her without cordiality. Cynthia makes an effort to talk and asks him if he is coming to the ceremony the next day. After apparent reluctance he says that he will, and then, turning to Miss Heneage, inquires what hour the alimony commences. Covering his slip, she replies that the ceremony is at 3 P. M. Miss Heneage goes out with him to discuss an important social question.

Enter Phillimore. Philip Phillimore is a self-centred, short-tempered, imperious member of the respectable fashionables of New York. He is well and solidly dressed and in manner and speech evidently a man of family. He is accustomed to being listened to in his home circle and from the bench, and it is practically impossible for him to believe that he can make a mistake.

Philip says that he values this hour of tea and toast tranquility with Cynthia. It is quite as if they were married already. Cynthia, looking through the paper, and as if admitting that married life is a blank, replies that she does feel as if they were already married. With a sigh he continues that it is the calm of second choice. As he turns over the leaves of the paper he starts to describe the feeling he has for her, but ends indolently by observing that the market is in a shocking condition of plethora.

Philip informs Cynthia that her former husband, John Karslake, is dead, or the next thing to it, for he is bankrupt. This news appears to move Cynthia. There are pictures of Karslake in the newspapers and an article stating that he has dropped a fortune at Saratoga, and is selling the jewels of the former Mrs. Karslake and her favorite riding mare, as well as his country place and racing stables.

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Philip's brother, Matthew, comes in. He is a high church clergyman to a highly fashionable congregation. He has been very successful in his calling, partly on account of his social position and partly on account of his elegance of speech, but chiefly on account of his inherent amiability, which leaves the sinner in happy peace. He smiles on the just and unjust alike. He has hardly entered the room when Philip is told that the maid of Mrs. Vida Phillimore is on the telephone, and Philip goes out.

Cynthia confides in Matthew that she committed an unpardonable sin when she married for love. One should marry for friendship. Philip is an ideal friend. She should have married sensibly in the first place, instead of because she had a wild, mad, sensitive, sympathetic—passion and pain and fury that almost strangled her with happiness.

When Philip got to the telephone there was no one there. He returns to the room. Mrs. Vida Phillimore is announced. Vida comes in slowly with the air of a spoiled beauty. She is dressed in the excess of the French fashion, speaks in a languorous caressing voice, and advances, smiling and undulating. She says that her reason for coming was to ask Philip about the B. &. O. stock they have together. Cynthia greets her with cheerful dash, saying she is delighted to see her. In reality she is outraged at the intrusion, but remains polite though delicately sarcastic.

Vida [*with flattering insistence, to* CYNTHIA]. Oh, my dear—don't go! [PHILIP *goes up L. C.*] The truth is—I came to see you! I feel most cordially toward you—and really, you know, people in our position should meet on cordial terms.

Cynthia [*taking it with apparent calm, but pointing her remarks*]. Naturally. If people in our position couldn't meet, New York society would soon come to an end.

Enter THOMAS.

Vida [*calm, but getting her knife in, too*]. Precisely. Society's no bigger than a band-box. Why, it's only a moment ago I saw Mr. Karslake walking——

Mr. John Karslake is announced. He is a powerful, generous personality, a man of affairs, breezy, gay, and careless. He gives the impression of being game for any

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fate in store for him. He has come to get the signature of the judge in a legal matter, and is astounded to find Cynthia there. Vida says that she must see the famous mare, Cynthia K., and persuades him to promise to bring the animal around to her house the next day at noon. Karslake and his ex-wife are a little stiff in addressing each other at first, but soon forget themselves and enter into an excited conversation about the stable.

Finally, when Cynthia asks Philip to lend Mr. Karslake enough money to make a bet with her, Philip says with a nervous laugh that there seems to him to be a certain impropriety in the situation. Cynthia apologizes, explaining that she forgets herself when horses are in the air. The fact is, she declares, seeing Mr. Karslake again, and she lays on her indifference with a trowel, seems like meeting with a stranger. Matthew remarks aside to Vida that they are taking tea on the slope of a volcano.

The next visitor to arrive is Sir Wilfrid Cates-Darby, an English horse-breeder. He is a high-bred, sporting Englishman. His manner, his dress, and his diction are the perfection of English elegance. His movements are quick and graceful. He talks lightly and with ease. He is full of life and unsmiling good temper.

In reply to a question from Vida, he says that as to the climate and horses of the country he has nothing to say, but he means to acquire some of the American humor for home use.

Vida [*getting down to love as the basis of conversation*]. Aren't you going to acquire an American girl for home purposes?

Sir Wilfrid. The more narrowly I look the agreeable project in the face the more I like it. Oughtn't to say that in the presence of your husband. [*He casts a look at* PHILIP, *who has gone into the next room.*]

Vida [*cheerful and unconstrained*]. He's not my husband!

Sir W. [*completely confused*]. Oh—eh?—my brain must be boiled. You are—Mrs.—eh—ah—of course, now I see! I got the wrong names! I thought you were Mrs. Phillimore. [*He sits by her.*] And that nice girl Mrs. Karslake! You're deucedly lucky to be Mrs. Karslake. John's a prime sort. I say, have you and he got any kids? How many?

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Vida [*horrified at being suspected of maternity, but speeding very sweetly*]. He's not my husband.

Sir W. [*his good spirits all gone, but determined to clear things up*]. Phew! Awfully hot in here! Who the deuce is John's wife?

Vida. He hasn't any.

Sir W. Who's Phillimore's wife?

Vida. He hasn't any.

Sir W. Thanks fearfully.

He approaches Matthew and implores his help. Matthew explains that Vida was his brother's wife, but that he divorced her on account of incompatibility, in Rhode Island; and that the other lady was Mr. Karslake's wife, and divorced him for desertion in Sioux Falls. She is now about to marry his brother.

Sir Wilfrid turns again to Vida who expects personal flattery in asking how he likes Cynthia, but he exclaims enthusiastically that Cynthia is "a box o' ginger!" Vida says that if he will pay her a visit the next day at noon he will meet a most charming young woman who has seen him once and admires him. He repeats her address and assures her he will be there at twelve.

Sir Wilfrid renews his conversation with Cynthia, saying he hears that she is about to marry Mr. Phillimore.

Cyn. To-morrow, 3 P. M., Sir Wilfrid.

Sir W. [*much taken with* CYNTHIA]. Afraid I've run into a sort of family party, eh? [*Indicates* VIDA.] The Past and the Future—awfully chic way you Americans have of asking your divorced husbands and wives to drop in, you know—celebrate a christenin', or the new bride, or——

She asks him how he likes his tea, and he tells her to just torture a lemon over it.

Sir W. Hate to see a pretty woman married. Might marry her myself.

Cyn. Oh, but I'm sure you don't admire American women.

Sir W. Admire you, Mrs. Karslake——

Cyn. Not enough to marry me, I hope.

Sir W. Marry you in a minute! Say the word. Marry you now—here.

Cyn. You don't think you ought to know me a little before——

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fat.

Sir W. Know you? Do know you. [CYNTHIA *covering her hair with her handkerchief.*]

Cyn. What color is my hair?

Sir W. Pshaw!

Cynthia says he doesn't know whether she is a chestnut or a strawberry roan! In the States they think a few months of friendship is quite necessary. Philip is pacing about nervously, watching Cynthia and Sir Wilfrid. Sir Wilfrid asks Cynthia if Philip goes to the head. She replies that Mr. Phillimore is her sober second choice. He declares she is marrying a man she doesn't care about. He doesn't offer himself—not this instant—but asks to drop in the next day at ten.

Cyn. I believe you think they throw one in with an ice-cream soda!

Sir W. [*rises*]. Damme, my dear lady, a marriage in your country is no more than a—eh—eh—what do you call 'em? A thank you, ma'am. That's what an American marriage is—a thank you, ma'am. Bump—bump—you're over it and on to the next.

Cyn. You're an odd fish! What? I believe I like you!

Sir W. Course you do! You'll see me when I call tomorrow—at ten? We'll run down to Belmont Park, eh?

Cyn. Don't be absurd!

Cynthia, learning that her favorite mare is to be at Vida's at noon the next day, asks if she may not come to see her. The conversation ceases, and for the moment every one seems irritated or embarrassed. Sir Wilfrid, a witness for the first time to the pretty complications of divorce, asks the clergyman if they have it as warm there ordinarily. Matthew, for whom these moments are more than usually painful, wipes his brow as he replies that it is not so much the heat as the humidity.

Karslake has to hurry away to attend a dinner that fifteen of his sporting creditors are giving to him at Sherry's.

When the guests have gone Cynthia is evidently much excited. Philip remarks that all that has happened must have been very disagreeable for her and shocked her delicacy. She agrees that it is outrageous. Looking at the picture of Karslake in the newspaper, Philip declares he

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doesn't wonder that she could not stand him. He finds a kind of spontaneous inebriety about the man.

Miss Heneage and Mrs. Phillimore return to the room, discussing the wedding announcement. Miss Heneage says it was Sudley's opinion that the announcement should be sent only to those people who are really in society. Cynthia braces herself to bear the Phillimore conversation, but begins slowly to crush the newspaper she has been reading with both hands as if the effort of self-repression was too much for her. Finally she gives up, driven desperate by the chatter, and having rolled the newspaper into a ball tosses it violently to the floor and bursts into hysterical laughter.

Vida Phillimore's boudoir is furnished to please an empty-headed, pleasure-loving woman; two French windows open on to a balcony from which the trees of Central Park can be seen. Vida in a morning gown is smoking a cigarette in as æsthetic a manner as she can, and is evidently turned out in her best style for conquest. She instructs the new English butler that she will receive Mr. Karslake at eleven and Sir Wilfrid Cates-Darby at twelve, but that she will be at home to no one else. Her maid brings her a box of roses and she cuts the stems and places them in a vase. When she feels that she has reached a picturesque position in which any on-looker would see in her a creature filled with the love of flowers and her fellowman, she says "there!"

The footman announces Sir John Karslake, who comes in immediately. He is dressed in very nobby riding togs. He is lively and far from being impressed by Vida. He tells her that the mare will be led around in ten minutes. She puts the last of the roses in the vase, keeping in her hand one rosebud of a suitable size for a man's buttonhole.

Referring to the mare, Karslake says "she" is an adorable creature, delicate, high-bred, sweet-tempered, but Vida asks him who he means by her. Karslake is irritated by the remembrance of his wife, and says he would rather talk about the last tornado. Vida asks why they parted, and in reply he inquires if she ever saw a schooner towed by a tug. He parted from Cynthia for the same reason that the hawser parts from the tug—he couldn't stand the tug.

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She will not let the matter go at that and finally, after some coaxing, he explains that Cynthia was an heiress, an American heiress, and had been taught to think that marriage meant burnt almonds and moonshine and a yacht and three automobiles, but he will tell her that marriage is three parts love and seven parts forgiveness of sins. For six or seven months there was not a shadow between them. It was perfect, and then one day she went off like a pistol shot.

Cynthia insisted that he should take her to a race when he had important law work to attend to. She went off like a stick of dynamite and asked what he married her for. High words followed and she got mad, threw over a chair, and said that marriage was a failure, or was with him anyway, and that she would try somebody else. He says that he shall live and love and make money again, and for one thing he is going to give Cynthia a rap over the knuckles. He has been testing the validity of the decree of divorce.

Vida [*letting her innate shrewdness appear*]. Oh, about a divorce, everything!

John. I shall hear by this evening whether the divorce will stand or not.

Vida. But it's to-day at three she marries—you won't let her commit bigamy?

John [*shakes his head*]. I don't suppose I'd go as far as that. It may be the divorce will hold, but anyway I hope never to see her again. [*He sits beside her facing up stage as she faces down.*]

Vida. Ah, my poor boy, she has broken your heart. [*Believing that this is her psychological moment, she lays her hand on his arm, but draws it back as soon as he attempts to take it.*] Now don't make love to me.

John [*bold and amused, but never taken in*]. Why not?

Vida [*with immense gentleness*]. Because I like you too much! [*More gayly.*] I might give in, and take a notion to like you still more!

John. Please do!

Vida [*with gush and determined to be womanly at all hazards*]. Jack, I believe you'd be a lovely lover!

John [*as before*]. Try me!

Vida [*not hoping much from his tone*]. You charming,

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tempting, delightful fellow, I could love you without the least effort in the world—but, no!

John [*playing the game*]. Ah, well, now *seriously!* Between two people who have *suffered* and made their own mistakes——

Vida [*playing the game, too, but not playing it well*]. But, you see, you don't *really* love me!

John [*still ready to say what is expected*]. Cynthia—Vida, no man can sit beside you and look into your eyes without feeling——

Vida [*speaks the truth as she sees it, seeing that her methods don't succeed*]. Oh! That's not love! That's simply —well, my dear Jack, it's beginning at the wrong end. And the truth is you hate Cynthia Karslake with such a wholehearted hate that you haven't a moment to think of any other woman.

John declares with sudden anger that he does hate her. Softly and most sweetly Vida tells him that she could be very foolish about him, and perhaps some day he will come to her and says that he is totally indifferent to Cynthia. Then perhaps she and he may join hands and stroll together into the garden of Eden. And once they are inside they will lock the gate. Seeing through her veneer, he continues gayly that they will lose the key under a rose bush.

The footman enters and starts to announce Sir Wilfrid, but the maid, following, stops him and says that the dressmaker is there. Vida asks Mr. Karslake if he would mind waiting a few moments in her men's clubroom. The maid shows him out. Vida takes the roses out of the vase, replaces them in the box, and is in precisely the same position which preceded Karslake's entrance when Brooks shows in Sir Wilfrid.

Sir Wilfrid begins with compliments as he watches her trim and arrange the flowers. When she has filled the vase with roses she rises to sweep by him and if possible make another charming picture to his eyes. She tells him that Cynthia won't be likely to come now, and besides she has given orders to admit no one. Mr. Karslake had been there and gone, and Cynthia's sole object in coming was to make him uncomfortable. That is a very dangerous symptom she remarks: the passionate desire to make one's former husband unhappy. But she cannot believe that

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his admiration for Cynthia Karslake is so warm that it led him to pay her this visit a half an hour too early.

He rises, most civil, but speaking his mind like a Briton. He acknowledges that he was jolly well bowled over with Mrs. Karslake and hoped to see her here. Then, she says, why did he want to see her, Vida? Of course Cynthia is to be married at three, and if she was not she would not have Sir Wilfrid. Speaking the truth, he blurts out that he meant to jolly well ask her. He did not intend to wound, but Vida is indignant to think that he should come to her house with that object.

Truthful even on a subtle point, Sir Wilfrid explains that that was only his first object in coming. He has a difficult time to explain his state of mind, a thing that he has never been able to do successfully. Mrs. Karslake is a nipper and no mistake, he declares, but as he told Vida, the very same evening that he met her, at the very same house—he attempts to take Vida's hand, informing her that he stayed awake an hour the night before thinking about her. She takes him to task gently.

Sir W. [*roused by so much loveliness of soul*]. Now, see here, Mrs. Phillimore! You and I are not bottle babies, eh, are we? You've been married and—I—I've knocked about, and we both know there's a lot of stuff talked about—eh, eh, well, you know—the one and only—that a fellow can't be awfully well smashed by two at the same time don't you know! All rubbish! You know it, and the proof of the puddin's in the eatin', I am!

Vida [*as before*]. May I ask where I come in?

Sir W. Well, now, Mrs. Phillimore, I'll be frank with you: Cynthia's my favorite, but you're runnin' her a close second in the popular esteem!

Vida [*laughs, determined not to take offence*]. What a delightful, original, fantastic person you are!

Sir W. [*frankly happy that he has explained everything so neatly*]. I knew you'd take it that way!

Vida. And what next, pray?

Sir W. Oh, just the usual—eh—thing—the—eh—the same old question don't you know. Will you have me if she don't?

Vida [*a shade piqued, but determined not to risk showing it*]. And you call that the same old usual question?

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Sir W. Yes, I know, but—but will you? I sail in a week; we can take the same boat. And—eh—eh—my dear Mrs.—mayn't I say Vida, I'd like to see you at the head of my table.

Vida [*with velvet irony*]. With Cynthia at the foot?

Sir W. [*practical, as before*]. Never mind Mrs. Karslake—I admire her—she's—but you have your own points! And you're here, and so'm I!—damme I offer myself, and my affections, and I'm no icicle, my dear, tell you that for a fact, and, and in fact, what's your answer? [VIDA *sighs and shakes her head.*] Make it yes! I say, you know, my dear Vida—— [*He catches her hands.*]

Vida [*she slips them from him*]. Unhand me, dear villain! And sit farther away from your second choice! What can I say? I'd rather have you for a lover than any man I know; you must be a lovely lover!

He assures her that he is, as he tries to catch her fingers again. She is incapable of leaving the situation unadorned, and suggests that they might sail to the garden of Eden and stroll into it, and lock the gate on the inside, and lose the key—under a rose bush. He pauses and then says solemnly that that is too clever for him. He draws nearer to her to bring the understanding to a crisis. At that moment the maid enters to say that the footman has made a mistake and told Mrs. Karslake that his mistress is at home.

Cynthia is visibly agitated as she comes in. She looks suspiciously at the smoke in the air and waves her hand through it. Then her eyes fall on two glasses, and finally she sees her husband's riding crop, picks it up, and looks at the inscription, "Jack, from Cynthia." Vida will not take the trouble to double for a mere woman, and admits that it is Mr. Karslake's crop but says that he left a few minutes ago.

The maid announced that a person has come with a horse. Cynthia runs to the balcony and looks out.

John Karslake has an appointment with the sheriff and has been getting impatient. He enters the room. Vida tells him to go back, but he does not understand, and she tosses a handkerchief into his face. At the same time Cynthia speaks. Turning around, she and John see each other. John looks very angry. Vida leaves them, saying she is going to put on a street frock to go out and see the horse.

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Cynthia begins with agitation, but frankly and with good will, saying she came because she was rude to him the evening before and wants to apologize. John is determined to be disagreeable. She tells him that she got time to come there by pretending that she was going to Louise's shop, and that he must see for himself that she is risking a scandal. What she wants to say is that even if they have made a mess of their married life they can put by anger and pride and can be reasonable and kind to each other. John turns away from her, remarking that he defended a murderer once who told him that he never felt so kind to anybody as he did to his victim after he had killed him. She murdered his happiness. He must put away anger and pride, but not just indignation.

John [*moved but surly*]. I like wildcats and I like Christians, but I don't like Christian wildcats! Now I'm close hauled, trot out your tornado! Let the tiger loose! It's the tamer, the man in the cage that has to look lively and use the red-hot crowbar! But, by Jove, I'm out of the cage! I'm a mere spectator of the married circus! [*He puffs vigorously.*]

Cyn. Be a game sport then! Our marriage was a wager; you wagered you could live with me. You lost; you paid with a divorce; and now is the time to show your sporting blood. Come on, shake hands and part friends.

John. Not in this world! Friends with you, no! I have a proper pride. I don't propose to put my pride in my pocket.

Cyn. [*jealous and plain spoken*]. Oh, I wouldn't ask you to put your pride in your pocket while Vida's handkerchief is there. [JOHN *looks angered.*] Pretty little bijou of a handkerchief! [CYNTHIA *takes handkerchief out.*] And she is charming, and divorced, and reasonably well made up.

John. Oh, well, Vida is a woman. [*Business with handkerchief.*] I'm a man, a handkerchief is a handkerchief, and as some old Aristotle or other said, whatever concerns a woman concerns me!

Cyn. [*not oblivious of him, but in a low voice*]. Insufferable! Well, yes. [*She sits. She is too much wounded to make any further appeal.*] You're perfectly right. There's no possible harmony between divorced people! I with-

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draw my hand and all good feeling. No wonder I couldn't stand you. Eh? However, that's pleasantly past! But at least, my dear Karslake, let us have some sort of beauty of behavior! If we cannot be decent, let us endeavor to be graceful. If we can't be moral, at least we can avoid being vulgar.

Cynthia says with a touch of bitterness that if there is to be nothing but re-marriage and re-divorce, at least those who are divorced can avoid the vulgarity of meeting each other here and there and everywhere.

Cyn. To find her—to find the man she has once lived with—in the house of—making love to—to find you here! [JOHN *smiles; rises.*] You smile—but I say it should be a social axiom, no woman should have to meet her former husband.

John [*cynical and cutting*]. Oh, I don't know; after I've served my term I don't mind meeting my jailer.

Cyn. [JOHN *takes chair near* CYNTHIA]. It's indecent—at the horse-show, the opera, at races, and balls, to meet the man who once—— It's not civilized! It's fantastic! It's half baked! Oh, I never should have come here! [*He sympathizes, and she grows irrational and furious.*] But it's entirely your fault!

John. My fault?

Cyn. [*working herself into a rage*]. Of course. What business have you to be about—to be at large. To be at all!

John. Gosh!

Cyn. [*as before*]. To be where I am! Yes, it's just as horrible for you to turn up in my life as it would be for a dead person to insist on coming back to life and dinner and bridge!

John. Horrid idea!

Cyn. Yes, but it's *you* who behave as if you were not dead, just as if I'd not spent a fortune on your funeral.

In an angry and plain-spoken manner she says he killed himself for her, and she divorced him, buried him out of her life.

In John's opinion seven months of married life is too short a time to cure a bad case of the fancies. With polite impertinence he adds that theirs is a case of premature divorce, that she is in love with him still. She retorts fu-

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riously that some day he will get the blind staggers from conceit. She is not in love with him, but she should not be surprised if Vida were. Vida is just his sort, a man-eating shark. He looks at her closely and asks why she is there. She had an irresistible longing to see him make an ass of himself just once more, she replies, and also to make an experiment on herself. She is glad to find that she is immune.

Gradually Cynthia gets the whip hand. Then she assures him that they must be friends and show New York the way the things should be done. In order to do that she wants him to be her best man and give her away when she is married that afternoon. She offers to bet her wedding gown to Cynthia K. that he won't dare to come, but determined not to be worsted he takes the bet, and she says they shall see which of the two is the real sporting goods.

Vida comes in to report that Philip is asking for Cynthia over the telephone. She told him that Cynthia was not there. The maid informs them that the new footman has been talking to Mr. Phillimore on the wire and told him that his lady was there.

Sir Wilfrid enters, perplexed and annoyed. He has been talking on the telephone with Phillimore, who accused him of running off with Mrs. Karslake. The trainer sends in word that the mare is getting restive and John and Vida go out to see her.

Sir Wilfrid notices that there are tears in Cynthia's eyes. She explains that they are caused by some Scotch whiskey that she drank by mistake. He insists that she is crying, and tells her she is marrying the wrong man. The footman brings in Judge Phillimore's card. Sir Wilfrid take it and tells the footman to inform the visitor that Mrs. Karslake is not there. He continues his argument with Cynthia declaring there is only one good reason for marrying and that is because you'll die if you don't. He proposes that they shall get into his motor and go to Belmont Park which will give her a chance to have a whim for him. He writes a dispatch for her to send: "Off with Cates-Darby to Races. Please postpone ceremony till seven-thirty."

Karslake comes back and Sir Wilfrid gives him the dis-

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patch, asking him to send it. Karslake, decidedly outraged at the idea, declares that his former wife cannot go to the races with Sir Wilfrid. Cynthia is delighted at the opportunity of outraging his sensibilities. Sir Wilfrid is merely curious to know if it is the custom for the former husband to dictate.

Cynthia thinks it would be rather rude to chuck Philip by wire. She tears up the telegram and asks her former husband to run down to the supreme court and tell the judge that she is off to the races with Sir Wilfrid, but will be back to marry him at eight-thirty or nine at the latest. They pass out leaving John staggered and furious.

The Phillimore family are not naturally patient. Miss Heneage, Mrs. Phillimore, and Grace having waited since half-past two, and as it is now twenty minutes to ten, are very exasperated at the delay. Neither bride nor bridegroom has reported. At last two telegrams are brought in. One of them, from Cynthia, tells of a shortage of gasoline and requests that they "hold the church." The family are very much shocked, especially when they perceive that the telegram was sent from Belmont Park. The other telegram is from Philip, who says he will arrive at ten o'clock and asks to have dinner ready.

Cynthia and Sir Wilfrid come together. She is all ready for the ceremony, and asks if the others are. Miss Heneage says they supposed she desired to break the engagement by going to the racecourse with a rowdy Englishman, and assures her that the alliance is not grateful to them. Cynthia affects gayety and unconcern and seems to think they are making too much of a fuss because the gasoline gave out.

Philip comes in dusty and grim. Sudley goes to him and asks if he shall call a hansom for Mrs. Karslake. Philip tells him shortly to have a hansom called and to get into it himself. Contrary to the expectations of his family, he means to go on with the marriage. He has no idea of being jilted on the eve of his wedding, as that would make him ridiculous. He demands to know of Cynthia why she ran off to Belmont Park.

Cyn. I was bored, and then—and besides, Sir Wilfrid asked me to go.

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Philip. Exactly, and that was why you went. Cynthia, when you promised to marry me, you told me you had forever done with love. You agreed that marriage was the rational coming together of two people.

Cyn. I know, I know!

Phil. Do you believe that now?

Cyn. I don't know what I believe. My brain is in a whirl! But, Philip, I am beginning to be—I'm afraid—yes, I am afraid that one can't just select a great and good man—[*she indicates him*]—and say: I will be happy with him.

Phil. [*with dignity*]. I don't see why not. You must assuredly do one or the other: you must either let your heart choose or your head select.

Cyn. [*gravely*]. No, there's a third scheme; Sir Wilfrid explained the theory to me. A woman should marry whenever she has a whim for the man, and then leave the rest to the man. Do you see?

Phil. [*furious*]. Do I see? Have I ever seen anything else? Marry for whim! That's the New York idea of marriage.

Philip insists on knowing if Cynthia is ready to marry him. She tries to temporize, but he pins her down and she is forced to say that she will keep her word. She is amazed and disgusted, however, to find that he thinks that she is interested in Sir Wilfrid.

Sir Wilfrid enters. Philip looks him straight in the face and directs the footman to tell him that he is not at home. Sir Wilfrid is quite undaunted, and Philip commands the footman to show him the door.

Sir W. [*goes to the door, examines it and returns to* PHILIP]. Eh—I admire the door, my boy! Fine old carved mahogany panel; but don't ask me to leave by it, for Mrs. Karslake made me promise I'd come, and that's why I'm here.

[THOMAS *exits, L.*

Phil. Sir, you are—impudent——!

Sir W. [*interrupting*]. Ah, you put it all in a nutshell, don't you?

Phil. To show your face here, after practically eloping with my wife!

Sir W. [*pretending ignorance*]. When were you married?

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Phil. We are as good as married.

Sir W. Oh, pooh, pooh! You can't tell me that grace before soup is as good as a dinner!

[*Takes cigar-case out; business of a dry smoke.*]

Phil. Sir—I—demand——

Sir W. [*calmly carrying the situation*]. Mrs. Karslake is *not* married. *That's* why I'm here. I am here for the same purpose *you* are: to ask Mrs. Karslake to be my wife.

Phil. Are you in your senses?

Sir W. [*touching up his American cousin in his pet vanity*]. Come, come, Judge—you Americans have no sense of humor. [*He takes a small jewel piece from his pocket.*] There's my regards to the lady—and [*reasonably*], if I must go, I will. Of course, I would like to see her, but—if it isn't your American custom——

Karslake enters in evening dress, carrying a large and very smart bride's bouquet which he hands to Philip. Philip takes it because he is not up to dropping it. Karslake, however, is aware that his coming to the ceremony is a social outrage, and he carries it off by assuming an air of its being the most natural thing in the world. He exclaims that Cynthia wagered he would not give her away. Philip requests both John and Sir Wilfrid to oblige him by leaving immediately. John asks who has a better right to attend his wife's obsequies, and Sir Wilfrid inquires if it is the custom.

John. No, no—of course it's not the custom, no. But we'll make it the custom. After all—what's a divorced wife among friends?

Phil. Sir, your humor is strained!

John. Humor—Judge?

Phil. It is, sir, and I'll not be bantered! Your both being here is—it is—gentlemen, there is a decorum which the stars in their courses do not violate.

John. Now, Judge, never you mind what the stars do in their divorces! Get down to earth of the present day. Rufus Choate and Daniel Webster are dead. You must be modern. You must let peroration and poetry alone! Come along now. Why shouldn't I give the lady away?

Sir W. Hear! Hear! Oh, I beg your pardon!

John. And why shouldn't we both be here? American marriage is a new thing. We've got to strike the pace,

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and the only trouble is, Judge, that the judiciary have so messed the thing up that a man can't be sure he *is* married until he's divorced. It's a sort of marry-go-round, to be sure! But let it go at that! Here we all are, and we're ready to marry my wife to you, and start her on her way to him!

Phil. [*brought to a standstill*]. Good Lord! Sir, you cannot trifle with monogamy!

John. Now, now, Judge, monogamy is just as extinct as knee-breeches. The new woman has a new idea, and the new idea is—well, it's just the opposite of the old Mormon one. Their idea is one man, ten wives, and a hundred children. Our idea is one woman, a hundred husbands and one child.

Phil. Sir, this is polyandry.

John. Polyandry? A hundred to one it's polyandry; and that's it, Judge! Uncle Sam has established consecutive polyandry—but there's got to be an interval between husbands! The fact is, Judge, the modern American marriage is like a wire fence. The woman's the wire—the posts are the husbands. [*He indicates himself, and then* SIR WILFRID *and* PHILIP.] One—two—three! And if you cast your eye over the future you can count them, post after post, up hill, down dale, all the way to Dakota!

Matthew is very much distressed at the situation when the arrival of Vida complicates matters further. He tells her that her presence is just as it should be, hesitates, and adds that it might be deemed inauspicious. Vida informs him that she has a reason for being there. She goes to Karslake, but his coldness toward her makes her abandon him finally as an object of the chase, and she lets him into her other game of arousing the jealousy of both Cynthia and Sir Wilfrid.

John, however, is beginning to regret having come, and determines to go away again. As the only means of detaining him, Vida pretends to faintness and falls into his arms. At this moment Cynthia sweeps in dressed for the ceremony. She tells Sir Wilfrid not to sprinkle water on Vida's forehead, but on her Paquin gown.

Vida comes to instantly and asks Karslake to take her into the other room where there is more air. Cynthia finds that the odor of the calla lilies makes her faint, and

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then decides that it is the orange blossoms—the flowers that grow on the tree that hangs over the abyss. Sir Wilfrid continues to make love to Cynthia with persistence and desperation, repeatedly proposing at frequent intervals, but she is harrowed at the sight of Vida and John billing and cooing in the next room.

Sir W. Eh? Why, you're cryin'!

Cyn. [*almost sobbing*]. I am not.

Sir W. You're not crying because you're in love with me?

Cyn. I'm not crying—or if I am, I'm crying because I love my country. It's a disgrace to America—cast-off husbands and wives getting together in a parlor and playing tag under a palm tree.

[JOHN *with intention and determined to stab* CYNTHIA, *kisses* VIDA'S *hand.*]

Sir W. Eh! Oh! I'm damned! [*To* CYNTHIA.] What do you think that means?

Cyn. I don't doubt it means a wedding here, at once—after mine!

[VIDA *and* JOHN *come down.*]

Vida [*affecting an impossible intimacy to wound* CYNTHIA *and tantalize* SIR WILFRID]. Hush, Jack—I'd much rather no one should know anything about it until it's all over!

Cyn. [*starts and looks at* SIR WILFRID]. What did I tell you?

Vida [*to* CYNTHIA]. Oh, my dear, he's asked me to champagne and lobster at *your* house—his house! Matthew is coming! [CYNTHIA *starts, but controls herself.*] And you're to come, Sir Wilfrid. [VIDA *speaks, intending to convey the idea of a sudden marriage ceremony.*] Of course, my dear, I would like to wait for your wedding, but something rather—rather important to me is to take place, and I know you'll excuse me.

As John bids Cynthia good-night, saying he is sorry that he came, she cannot see why he should regret his visit, as he has got what he wanted. She wouldn't mind his marrying Vida, but she doesn't think they showed good taste in engaging themselves there.

John. Of course, I should have preferred a garden of roses and plenty of twilight.

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Cyn. [*rushing into speech*]. I'll tell you what you *have* done—you've thrown yourself away! A woman like that! No head, no heart! All languor and loose—loose frocks—she's the typical, worst thing America can do! She's the regular American marriage worm!

John. I have known others——

Cyn. [*quickly*]. Not me. I'm not a patch on that woman. Do you know anything about her life? Do you know the things she did to Philip? Kept him up every night of his life—forty days out of every thirty—and then, without his knowing it, put brandy in his coffee to make him lively at breakfast.

John [*banteringly*]. I begin to think she is just the woman——

Cyn. [*unable to quiet her jealousy*]. She is *not* the woman for *you!* A man with your bad temper—your airs of authority—your assumption of—of—everything. What you need is a good, old-fashioned, bread-poultice woman! [CYNTHIA, *full stop; faces* JOHN.]

Tears of rage choke Cynthia at last as she declares she liked John's father and for his sake will not let John make a donkey of himself by marrying Vida. He insists on knowing why she should care.

John [*interrupting her; proud, serious, and strong*]. How dare you look me in the face with the eyes that I once kissed, and pretend the least regard for me! [CYNTHIA *recoils and looks away. Her own feelings are revealed to her clearly for the first time.*] I begin to understand our American women now. Fireflies—and the fire they gleam with is so cold that a midge couldn't warm his heart at it, let alone a man. You're not of the same race as a man. You married me for nothing, divorced me for nothing, because you *are* nothing!

Cynthia is wounded to the heart, but he goes on to tell her that she cannot forget him, and that she may prance gayly up to the altar and marry Phillimore if she can. He goes out quickly and she sinks trembling into an armchair.

A sudden bustle begins as the time for the ceremony draws near. Matthew has selected the hymn, "Enduring Love, Sweet End of Strife," and tells the choir boys that they are to begin when he raises his hands. He assumes an important position at an altar of flowers, and shows Philip

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where he is to stand. Cynthia, breathing fast, supports herself by holding to a table. The others gather around and the organ plays Mendelssohn's wedding march.

Miss Heneage extends her hand in readiness to lead the bride to the altar. Cynthia stands turned to stone. Matthew requests her to take her place. She goes forward slowly, but just as she reaches Philip she stops, looks him in the face, and calls out to the footman to send for a hansom. She grasps her cloak from the table and declares that she cannot go through with it, that she must hurry to Jack. Philip blankly demands to know what for.

Cyn. To stop his marrying Vida. I'm blowing a hurricane inside, a horrible, happy hurricane! I know myself —I know what's the matter with me. If I married you and Miss Heneage—what's the use of talking about it—he mustn't marry that woman. He shan't. [CYNTHIA *has now all her wraps on; goes up rapidly. To* PHILIP.] Sorry! So long! Good-night and see you later.

[CYNTHIA *goes to door R., rapidly;* MATTHEW, *in absolute amazement, throws up his arms.* PHILIP *is rigid.* MRS. PHILLIMORE *sinks into a chair.* MISS HENEAGE *supercilious and unmoved.* GRACE *the same. The choir, at* MATTHEW'S *gesture, mistakes it for the concerted signal, and bursts lustily into the Epithalamis.*]

"Enduring love—sweet end of strife!
Oh, bless this happy man and wife!"

It so happens that Matthew, taking a hansom with a fast horse, gets to Karslake's house ahead of Cynthia and there, with the ring which Philip had intended for her, marries Vida and Sir Wilfrid. When Cynthia arrives and makes her way rather shyly into John's study, she finds that the Reverend Matthew Phillimore has been there and gone.

Cyn. You don't mean I'm too late? He's married them already?

Fiddler. Nogam says he married them.

Cyn. He's married them! Married! Married before I could get here! [*Sits in an armchair.*] Married in less time than it takes to pray for rain! Oh, well, the church —the church is a regular quick marriage counter.

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She hears the voices of Vida and John in lighthearted laughter in the next room and locks the connecting door. Then, looking about the room, she remarks that everything is a good deal as it used to be in her day.

Fid. No, ma'am, everything changed, even the horses.

Cyn. [*still looking about the room, absently*]. Horses—how are the horses?

Fid. Ah, when husband and wife splits, ma'am, it's the horses that suffer. Oh, yes, ma'am, we're all changed since you give us the go-by—even the guv'nor.

Watching his chance, Fiddler unlocks the door again and slips out when Cynthia is not noticing him. She is saying good-bye to her life with John and is about to go when he comes in. She is rather confused, but says she heard Cynthia K. was ill and came round to see. Just as she asks for the bride, Vida enters. She comes forward and gives John a kiss, which she says is the wages of virtue. Sir Wilfrid comes in in time to see her.

Sir W. [*in time to see her kiss* JOHN]. I say, is it the custom? Every time she does that, my boy, you owe me a thousand pounds. [*Sees* CYNTHIA, *who comes down above chair; he looks at her and* JOHN *in turn.*] Mrs. Karslake! [*To* JOHN.] And then you say it's not an extraordinary country!

[CYNTHIA *is more and more puzzled.*]

Vida [*to* JOHN]. See you next Derby, Jack! [*Crosses to door R. To* SIR WILFRID.] Come along, Wilfrid! We really ought to be going. [*To* CYNTHIA.] I hope, dear, you haven't married him! Phillimore's a tomb! Good-bye, Cynthia—I'm so happy! [*As she goes.*] Just think of the silly people, dear, that only have this sensation once in a lifetime!

[*Exit* VIDA. JOHN *follows* VIDA *off.*

Sir W. [*to* CYNTHIA]. Good-bye, Mrs. Karslake. And I say, ye know, if you have married that dull old Phillimore fellah, why, when you've divorced him, come over and stay at Traynham! I mean, of course, ye know, bring your new husband. There'll be lots o' horses to show you, and a whole covey of jolly little Cates-Darbys. Mind you come! [*With real delicacy of feeling and forgetting his wife.*] Never liked a woman as much in my life as I did you!

Vida [*outside; calling him*]. Wilfrid, dear!

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Sir W. [*loyal to the woman who has caught him*]——except the one that's calling me!

As he goes out John returns. John expresses surprise at Cynthia's visit, and asks if she has married Phillimore. The tables are now turned. She says she has not yet, but does not know whether she is going to or not. He asks her to sit down, at least until Phillimore comes for her, and talk things over.

Cyn. [*suddenly and quickly*]. It's just simply a fact, Karslake, and that's all there is to it—if a woman has once been married—that is, the first man she marries—then—she may quarrel, she may hate him—she may despise him—but she'll always be jealous of him with other women. Always!

[JOHN *takes this as if he were simply glad to have the information.*]

John. Oh—— Hm! ah—yes—yes. [*A pause.*]

Cyn. You probably felt jealous of Phillimore.

John [*reasonably, sweetly, and in doubt*]. N–o! I felt simply: let him take his medicine. [*Apologetically.*]

Cyn. Oh!

John. I beg your pardon—I meant——

Cyn. You meant what you said!

John [*comes a step to her*]. Mrs. Karslake, I apologize—I won't do it again. But it's too late for you to be out alone—Philip will be here in a moment—and, of course, then——

Cyn. It isn't what you *say*—it's—it's—it's everything. It's the entire situation. Suppose by any chance I don't marry Phillimore! And suppose I were seen at two or three in the morning leaving my former husband's house! It's all wrong. I have no business to be here! I'm going! You're perfectly horrid to me, you know—and the whole place—it's so familiar, and so—so associated with—with——

John. Discord and misery—I know——

Cyn. Not at all with discord and misery! With harmony and happiness—with—with first love, and infinite hope—and—and—Jack Karslake—if you don't set that chair on its legs, I think I'll explode.

John rights a chair. It is the one she kicked over when she told him marriage was a failure. He gave orders that

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no one was to touch it, she snatches an old hat of hers, some gloves and sewing, and throws them into the fireplace. His seeming indifference wounds her. It is a pleasure he says, seeing her in a whirlwind, just as she used to be when she was kicking the stuffing out of the matrimonial buggy. She reminds him that when he married her she had never had a bit in her mouth. They recall some of their tiffs.

Finally, John's valet comes to say that Mr. Phillimore is at the door with a hansom and wants Mrs. Karslake. John asks her if she is going. "Never!" she declares positively. John goes to the window, opens it, and calls out to Phillimore that he need not wait. As he comes back he bursts out laughing. Cynthia looks dazed. She must go to a hotel. He says she can have a bite to eat first, and gets a tray from the next room. When he has drunk to her next husband, she says he may drink to his relation to her, first wife once removed. At last she rises. He asks why she should go. There is no reason why she should, he adds.

Cyn. Oh, you don't mean that! And, you know, Jack, if I were caught—seen at this hour, leaving this house, you know—it's the most scandalous thing any one ever did: my being here at all. [*Crosses to R. C.*] Goodbye, Jack! [*Pause; almost in tears.*] I'd like to say, I—I—I—well, I shan't be bitter about you hereafter, and—— [*Pause.*] Thank you awfully, old man, for the fodder and all that! [*Turns to go out R. upper.*]

John. Mrs. Karslake—wait!——

Cyn. [*stopping to hear*]. Well?

John [*serious*]. I've rather an ugly bit of news for you.

Cyn. Yes?

John. I don't believe you know that I have been testing the validity of the decree of divorce which you procured.

Cyn. Oh, have you?

John. Yes; you know I felt pretty warmly about it.

Cyn. Well?

John. Well, I've been successful. [*Pause.*] The decree's been declared invalid. Understand?

Cyn. [*looks at him a moment; then speaks*]. Not—precisely.

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John [*pause*]. I'm awfully sorry—I'm awfully sorry, Cynthia, but, you're my wife still. [*Pause.*]

Cyn. [*with rapture*]. Honor bright? [*She sinks into the armchair.*]

John [*nods. Half laughingly*]. Crazy country, isn't it?

Cyn. [*nods. Pause*]. Well, Jack—what's to be done?

John [*gently*]. Whatever you say. [*Moves C.*]

Nogam [*quietly enters door R.*]. Hansom, sir.

[*Exits;* CYNTHIA *rises.*

John. Why don't you finish your supper?

[CYNTHIA *hesitates.*]

Cyn. The—the—hansom——

John. Why go to the Holland? After all—you know, Cyn, you're at home here.

Cyn. No, Jack, I'm not—I'm not at home here—unless—unless——

John. Out with it!

Cyn. [*bursting into tears*]. Unless I—unless I'm at home in your heart, Jack!

John. What do you think?

Cyn. I don't believe you want me to stay.

John. Don't you?

Cyn. No, no, you hate me still. You never can forgive me. I know you can't. For I can never forgive myself. Never, Jack, never, never! [*She sobs and he takes her in his arms.*]

John [*very tenderly*]. Cyn! I love you! [*Strongly.*] And you've got to stay! And hereafter you can chuck chairs around till all's blue! Not a word now. [*He draws her gently to a chair.*]

Cyn. [*wiping her tears*]. Oh, Jack! Jack!

John. I'm as hungry as a shark. We'll nibble together.

Cyn. Well, all I can say is, I feel that of all the improprieties I ever committed this—this——

John. This takes the claret, eh? Oh, Lord, how happy I am!

Cyn. Now don't say that! You'll make me cry more. [*She wipes her eyes.* JOHN *takes out wedding ring from his pocket; he lifts a wine glass, drops the ring into it, and offers her the glass.*]

John. Cynthia!

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Cyn. [*looking at it and wiping her eyes*]. What is it?

John. Benedictine!

Cyn. Why, you know I never take it.

John. Take this one for my sake.

Cyn. That's not benedictine. [*With gentle curiosity.*] What is it?

John [*he slides the ring out of the glass and puts his arm about* CYNTHIA. *He slips the ring on to her finger and, as he kisses her hand, says.*] Your wedding ring!

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THE GREAT DIVIDE*

By William Vaughn Moody

Argument: Threatened with violence by three men who break into the cabin where she has been left on a lonely ranch, Ruth Jordan offers to be the wife of one of them if he will save her. After her marriage the thought that she should have died rather than accept life as she did preys upon her until she leaves her husband. Can her remorse be transformed into the belief that her marriage may be justified by the happiness that she can give her husband and have for herself?

As night falls on a lonely Arizona ranch, Ruth Jordan, a girl of nineteen who was brought up in a small New England town, is the only person left to guard the premises. Although a tenderfoot, she is so far from feeling concerned at the situation that she forgets the parting caution of her brother not to show a light in the cabin. Her mind is occupied with dreams of an ideal lover, the sublime abstraction of the West—the desert—the glorious unfulfilled.

She is beginning to prepare for bed when a man looks in at one of the windows. She does not see him, but suddenly recalling her brother's warning, puts out the light. Voices are heard outside. The latch is tried, and then the door is burst in. Three men enter. One of them lights a match and finds Ruth levelling a gun at him. The gun misses fire and the men disarm Ruth and light the lamp.

The men are dressed in rude frontier fashion. One called "Shorty" is a Mexican half-breed. The other two, "Dutch" and Ghent, are Americans. All three are intoxicated. The Mexican seizes Ruth and attempts to drag her toward the inner room. She breaks away from

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him and brandishes a knife. Dutch clasps her in his arms, but with the strength of desperation she wrenches herself free from him also. The Mexican and Dutch consider shaking dice for her and she appeals to Ghent.

Ruth. Save me! Save me! [*Her gesture is frozen by his advancing toward her. She looks wildly about, shrinking from him, then with sudden desperate resolution speaks.*] Save me, and I will make it up to you! [GHENT *again advances; she goes on pantingly, as she stands at bay.*] Don't touch me! Listen! Save me from these others, and from yourself, and I will pay you—with my life.

Ghent [*with dull wonder*]. With—your life?

Ruth. With all that I am or can be.

Ghent. What do you mean? [*Pause*]. You mean you'll go along with me out of this? Stick to me—on the square?

Ruth [*in a tragic whisper*]. Yes.

Ghent. On the dead square?

Ruth. Yes.

Ghent. You won't peach and spoil it?

Ruth. No. [*Pause, during which he looks at her fixedly.*]

Ghent. Give me your hand on it!

Ghent offers the other men money. Even the Mexican thrusts it away with scorn. Dutch declares that "A ornery buck of a dirt-eatin' Mojave'd pay more'n that for his squaw." Ghent produces a string of gold nuggets and the dazzled Mexican is eliminated. To settle with Dutch Ghent proposes "a square stand-up shoot, the best man taking her." Dutch accepts, and Shorty agrees to carry away the man who falls. They file out of the cabin. Presently four terrific shots crash on Ruth's ears. When the door opens again it is Ghent who enters.

Ghent. We can reach San Jacinto before sun-up. Then we're off for the Cordilleras. I've got a claim tucked away in them hills that'll buy you the city of Frisco some day, if you have a mind to it! [*She shrinks and shudders.*] What are you shivering at? [RUTH *does not answer, but begins to write.* GHENT, *still using only one hand, takes a pistol from his pocket, examines it, and lays it carelessly on the table, within* RUTH'S *reach. He rises and goes to the fireplace, takes a cigarette from his pocket and lights it, and examines the objects on the mantel-shelf.* RUTH *stops writing, takes up the pistol, then lays it down, as he speaks*

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without turning round.] Read what you've written. [RUTH, *about to read, snatches up the pistol again, rises, and stands trembling and irresolute.*] Why don't you shoot? [*He turns round deliberately.*] You promised on the square, but there's nothing square about this deal. You ought to shoot me like a rattlesnake!

Ruth. I know that.

Ghent. Then why don't you?

Ruth [*slowly*]. I don't know.

Ghent. I guess you've got nerve enough, for that or anything. Answer me; why not?

Ruth. I don't—know. You laid it there for me and—you have no right to die.

Ghent. How's that?

Ruth. You must live, to pay for having spoiled your life.

Ghent. Do you think it is spoiled?

Ruth. Yes.

Ghent. And how about your life?

Ruth. I tried to do it.

Ghent. To do what?

Ruth. To take my life. I ought to die. I have a right to die. But I cannot, I cannot! I love my life, I must live. In torment, in darkness—it doesn't matter. I want my life. I will have it! [*She drops the weapon on the table, pushes it toward him, and covers her eyes.*] Take it away! Don't let me see it. If you want me on these terms, take me, and may God forgive you for it; but if there is a soul in you to be judged, don't let me do myself violence. [*She sinks down by the table, hiding her face in her hands.*] O God have pity on me!

[GHENT *puts the pistol back into his belt, goes slowly to the outer door, opens it, and stands for some moments gazing out. He then closes the door, and takes a step or two toward the table. As he speaks,* RUTH'S *sobs cease, she raises her head and looks strangely at him.*]

Ghent. I've lived hard and careless, and lately I've been going downhill pretty fast. But I haven't got so low yet but what I can tell one woman from another. If that was all of it, I'd be miles away from here by now, riding like hell for liquor to wash the taste of shame out of my mouth. But that ain't all. I've seen what I've been

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looking the world over for, and never knew it. Say your promise holds, and I'll go away now.

Ruth. Oh, yes, go, go! You will be merciful. You will not hold me to my cruel oath.

Ghent. And when I come back? [RUTH *does not answer. He takes a step nearer.*] And when I come back?

Ruth. You never—could—come back.

Ghent. No, I guess I never could.

Ruth [*eager, pleading*]. You will go?

Ghent. For good?

Ruth. Yes.

Ghent. Do you mean that?

Ruth [*wildly*]. Yes, yes, ten thousand times.

Ghent. Is that your last word?

Ruth. Yes. [*Pause. She watches him with strained anxiety.*] Oh, why did you come here to-night?

Ghent. I come because I was blind-drunk and sun-crazy, and looking for damnation the nearest way. That's why I come. But that's not why I'm staying. I'm talking to you in my right mind now. I want you to try and see this thing the way it is.

Ruth. Oh, that is what I want you to do! You did yourself and me a hideous wrong by coming here. Don't do us both a more hideous wrong still! I was in panic fear. I snatched at the first thing I could. Think what our life would be, beginning as we have begun! Oh, for God's pity go away now, and never come back! Don't you see there can never be anything between us but hatred, and misery, and horror?

Ghent [*hardening*]. We'll see about that! Are you ready to start?

Ghent has been shot in the forearm and when Ruth notices it she binds up the wound. She declares, however, it is no more than what she would do for a dog.

Ghent. Yes, I dare say. But the point is, I ain't a dog; I'm a human—the worst way! [*She rises and puts away the liniment and bandages. He starts up, with an impulsive gesture.*] Make this bad business over into something good for both of us! You'll never regret it! I'm a strong man! [*He holds out his right arm, rigid.*] I used to feel sometimes, before I went to the bad, that I could take the world like that and tilt her over. And

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I can do it, too, if you say the word! I'll put you where you can look down on the proudest. I'll give you the kingdoms of the world and all the glory of 'em. [*She covers her face with her hands. He comes nearer.*] Give me a chance, and I'll make good. By God, girl, I'll make good!—I'll make a queen of you. I'll put the world under your feet! [RUTH *makes a passionate gesture, as if to stop her ears.*] What makes you put your hands over your ears like that? Don't you like what I'm saying to you?

Ruth [*taking the words with difficulty*]. Do you remember what that man said just now?

Ghent. What about?

Ruth. About the Indian—and—his squaw.

Ghent. Yes. There was something in it, too. I was a fool to offer him that mean little wad.

Ruth. For—me!

Ghent. Well, yes, for you, if you want to put it that way.

Ruth. But—a chain of nuggets—that comes nearer being a fair price?

Ghent. Oh, to buy off a greaser!

Ruth. But to buy the soul of a woman—one must go higher. A mining claim! The kingdoms of the world and all the glory of them! [*Breaking down in sudden sobs.*] Oh, be careful how you treat me! Be careful! I say it as much for your sake as mine. Be careful!

Ghent [*turns from her, his bewilderment and discomfiture translating itself into gruffness*]. Well, I guess we'll blunder through. Come along! We've no time to lose. Where are your things?

[*At her gesture, he picks up the saddle-pack which she has brought out of the bedroom with her, and starts toward the door.*]

Ruth [*taking a hammer from the window-ledge and handing it to* GHENT]. Fix the bolt. My brother must not know.

[*He drives in the staple of the bolt, while she throws the blood-stained water and handkerchief into the fire. He aids her in replacing the weapons on the walls, then takes the saddle-pack and stands at the door, waiting. She picks up her mother's picture, and thrusts it in her bosom. After standing a moment in hesitation, she takes the picture out,*

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kisses it, lays it on the mantel face down. She extinguishes the lamp, and goes out hastily. He follows, closing the door.]

Stephen Ghent took up his abode with his young wife on a mining claim beyond the Cordilleras. She wiles away many hours weaving Navajo blankets. The mine has prospered and Ghent has been away to see a contractor about building a luxurious house. Upon his return Ruth receives him coldly. When he tells her of the plans for a house she remarks scornfully that her price has risen. He gives her jewels that he has brought, and she casts them over a cliff.

The scene is interrupted by the arrival of Winthrop Newbury, a suitor whom she had rejected, with other friends who have succeeded in tracing her. Winthrop sees that she is pale and worn, and fears that she is desperately ill. He asks a question of vital interest to himself: how long had she known the lover with whom she eloped? "All my life!" she declares, "and for æons before." Ruth's friends learn that Ghent is the owner of the Verdi mine, which has suddenly become famous, but it appears that capital was supplied by a partner who is now making trouble by declaring that he owns the entire property.

Ruth's brother Philip tells her that her explanation of her flight from the ranch explains nothing. She soon silences him, declaring that her right to choose her own course in life was unimpeachable, and that the man whose destiny she elected to share cannot be insulted in her presence. Philip tells her that her desertion at the critical moment in their enterprise at the ranch has resulted in his ruin. Finally she breaks down and weeps convulsively, and he urges her to go home with him if for only a month. She will not do so. He tells her to remember that if she ever has anything to complain of in her life, it is his right to know it and make the offender answerable.

It is a great surprise to Ghent to learn that Ruth's rugs and baskets are on sale at the hotel, and when the guests have left he asks her if she has wanted money.

Ghent [*slowly*]. You haven't been willing to take money from me?

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HENRY MILLER AS STEPHEN GHENT AND MARGARET ANGLIN AS RUTH JORDAN

Ghent. Ruth, do you remember our journey here? I thought—it seemed to me you had—begun to care for me

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Ruth. No. I know it was small of me, but I couldn't help it. I have paid for everything. I have kept account of it—oh, to the last dreadful penny! These clothes are the ones I wore from my brother's house that night. This shelter—you know I helped to raise that with my own hands. And—and some things I paid for secretly, from the little hoard I brought away with me. You were careless; you did not notice.

Ghent [*sits down, dizzy from the shock of her words*]. I must try to grasp this! [*There is a silence, during which he sits perfectly motionless. At last he turns to her.*] Why —why did you stand up so plucky, so splendid, just now? Put a good face on everything about our life? Call me by my first name and all that—before your own people?

Ruth. We are man and wife. Besides that, my own people are as strangers.

Ghent [*eagerly*]. You say that? You can still say that?

Ruth [*looks up, startled*]. Can't you? [*She awaits his answer tensely.*]

Ghent [*desperately*]. Oh, I don't know. I can't say or think anything, after what you have just told me! [*Wails.*] You can't say it! And it isn't true! It is we who are strangers. Worse, a thousand times worse!

Ghent [*rises and stands over her*]. Don't let us dash ourselves in hell in one crazy minute! [*He pauses and hesitates. When he speaks again it is with wistful tenderness.*] Ruth, do you remember our journey here? [*She lifts her head, looking at him, with white, thirsty face.*] I thought —it seemed to me you had—begun to care for me.

Ruth. That night, when we rode away from the justice's office at San Jacinto, and the sky began to brighten over the desert—the ice that had gathered here—[*she touches her heart*]—began to melt in spite of me. And when the next night and the next day passed, and the next, and the next, and still you spared me and treated me with beautiful rough chivalry, I said to myself, "He has heard my prayer to him. He knows what a girl's heart is." As you rode before me down the arroyos, and up over the mesas, through the dazzling sunlight and the majestic silence, it seemed as if you were leading me out of a world of little codes and customs into a great new world. So

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it was for those first days. And then—and then—I woke, and saw you standing in my tent-door in the starlight! I knew before you spoke that we were lost. You hadn't had the strength to save us!

Ghent [*huskily*]. Surely it hasn't all been—hateful to you? There have been times since that. The afternoon we climbed up here; the day we made the table; the day we planted the vines.

Ruth [*in a half whisper*]. Yes! Beautiful days! [*She puts her hands suddenly before her face and sobs.*] Oh, it was not my fault! I have struggled against it. You don't know how I have struggled!

Ghent. Against what? Struggled against what?

Ruth. Against the hateful image you had raised up beside your own image.

Ghent. What do you mean?

Ruth. I mean that sometimes—often—when you stand there before my eyes, you fade away, and in your place I see—the Other One!

Ghent. Speak plainly, for God's sake! I don't understand this talk.

Ruth [*looking steadfastly, as at an invisible shape, speaks in a horrified whisper*]. There he stands behind you now! The human beast, that goes to its horrible pleasure as not even a wild animal will go—*in pack, in pack!* [GHENT, *stung beyond endurance, rises and paces up and down.* RUTH *continues in a broken tone, spent by the violence of her own words.*] I have tried—oh, you don't know how I have tried to save myself from these thoughts. While we were poor and struggling I thought I could do it. Then—[*she points toward the cañon*]—then that hole down there began belching its stream of gold. You began to load me with gifts—to force easy ways upon me——

Ghent. Well, what else did I care to make money for?

[RUTH *does not answer for a moment, then speaks slowly, taking the words with loathing upon her tongue.*]

Ruth. Every time you give me anything, or talk about the mine and what it is going to do, there rings in my ears that dreadful sneer: "A dirt-eating Mojave would pay more than that for his squaw!" [*She rises, lifting her arms.*] I held myself so dear! And you bought me for a

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handful of gold, like a woman of the street! You drove me before you like an animal from the market! [GHENT *has seated himself again, elbows on knees and face in his hands.* RUTH *takes slowly from her bosom the nugget chain and holds it crumpled up in her palm. Her tone is quiet, almost matter-of-fact.*] I have got back the chain again.

Ghent [*looks up*]. Chain? What chain?

Ruth [*in the same tone, as she holds it up, letting it unwind*]. The one you bought me with.

Ruth says that the chain has been around her neck, around her limbs, a chain of living fire; that link by link she has unwound it; that he must take it and let her go free. She asks not only for herself, but for another life that she has to think of. He only declares that she is his more than ever. Philip comes back to ask Ruth to return with them for one night. Weeping, she tells him brokenly to take her home.

At the old Jordan homestead at Milford Corners, Massachusetts, Philip tells Winthrop Newbury that he and his family have escaped the poorhouse through the intervention of a benevolent uncle. Even his mother's little capital is gone. Philip's wife, Polly, reads in a newspaper that Cactus Fibre, the property they had to sacrifice, was not only listed on the stock exchange but selling at eighty-four.

The family doctor reports that Ruth is in a dangerous condition and that he fears for her mind. Her attitude toward the child seems cold and unfeeling. Polly announces abruptly that what Ruth needs is her husband, and that she has sent for him. Philip is overcome with anger. They break the news to him that Ghent has already arrived. Polly states her view of Ruth's case bluntly, and somewhat shockingly, it appears, to Mrs. Jordan.

Polly [*pluming herself, doctrinaire*]. Well! Here on the one hand is the primitive, the barbaric woman, falling in love with a romantic stranger, who, like some old Viking on a harry, cuts her with his two-handed sword from the circle of her kinsmen, and bears her away on his dragon ship toward the midnight sun. Here, on the other hand, is the derived, the civilized woman, with a civilized nervous system, observing that the creature eats bacon with his

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bowie knife, knows not the manicure, has the conversation of a preoccupied walrus, the instincts of a jealous caribou, and the endearments of a dancing crab in the mating season.

Polly believes Ruth's marriage was made in heaven: that she and Ghent were predestined lovers. She says Ghent is the kind of man women can't resist. Ghent comes and seeks an interview with Mrs. Jordan, tells her that he must return to the West to keep his partner from stealing the Verdi mine, and demands Mrs. Jordan's promise that Ruth shall not learn of his benefactions to the family. Mrs. Jordan begs him to unravel the whole mystery of his trouble with Ruth.

Ghent [*gathers himself together*]. Mrs. Jordan, I want you to promise that what I put in your hands from time to time comes to your daughter as if from another source.

Mrs. Jordan. You are going away for good?

Ghent. Yes.

Mrs. J. You give her up?

Ghent. A man can't give up what isn't his.

Mrs. J. What isn't his? She is your wife.

Ghent. No. Never has been.

Mrs. J. [*terrified*]. Oh, pitiful heavens!

Ghent. I beg your pardon—I was only trying to say—I used to think that when a couple was married, there they were, man and wife, and that was the end of it. I used to think that when they had a child, well, sure enough it was their child, and all said. And there's something in that, too. [*He stares before him, smiting the table and speaking with low intensity.*] Damn me if there ain't something eternal in it! [*He sits for a moment more in gloomy thought.*] Do you think she'll make up to the young one, after a bit?

Mrs. J. Oh, surely! To think otherwise would be too dreadful!

Ghent. I'd give a deal to know. It's kind of lonesome for the little rooster, sitting out there all by himself on the world's doorstep!—I must see her for a minute before I go. Do your best for me.

Mrs. J. I will do what I can.

Ghent. You can put it as a matter of business. There is a matter of business I want to talk over with her, if I can get up the gumption.

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It was Ghent who bought up the cactus property, and he wants to give it to the Jordan family to cancel what Ruth regards as her debt to them. Ruth enters and finds Ghent. Mrs. Jordan tells her that he is leaving again for the West and wants to see her before he goes. Mrs. Jordan insists that she shall hear what he has to say, for it is he who has kept them from being turned into the street.

Ruth [*flaming into white wrath*]. Explained! Did he explain that when I was left alone that night at the ranch he came—with two others—and when gun and knife had failed me, and nothing stood between me and their drunken fury, I sold myself to the strongest of them, hiding my head behind the name of marriage? Did he explain that between him and the others money clinked—[*she raps on the table*]—my price in hard money on the table? And now that I have run away to the only refuge I have on earth, he comes to buy the very house where I have hidden and every miserable being within it! [*Long pause. She looks about blankly and sinks down by the table.*]

Mrs. J. [*cold and rigid*]. And you—married him—after that? [*She turns away in horror-stricken judgment.*] You ought to have—died—first! [PHILIP *opens the door and enters, staring at* GHENT *with dislike and menace.*] Oh, Philip, she has told me!—You can't imagine what horrors!

[RUTH *rises, with fright in her face, and approaches her brother to restrain him.*]

Philip. Horrors? What horrors?

Mrs. J. It was your fault! You ought never to have left her alone in that dreadful place! She—she married him—to save herself—from—Oh, horrible!

[PHILIP *waits an instant, the truth penetrating his mind slowly. Then, with mortal rage in his face, he starts toward* GHENT.]

Philip. You—dog!

[RUTH *throws herself in* PHILIP'S *path.*]

Ruth. No, no, no!

Philip. Get out of my way. This is my business now.

Ruth. No, it is mine. I tell you it is mine.

Philip. We'll see whose it is. I said that if the truth ever came out, this man should answer to me, and now, by God, he shall answer! [*With another excess of rage he tries to thrust* RUTH *from his path.* MRS. JORDAN, *terrified*

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at the storm she has raised, clings desperately to her son's arm.]

Ruth. I told him long ago it should be between us. Now it shall be between us.

Mrs. J. Philip! For my sake, for your father's sake! Don't, don't! You will only make it worse. In pity's name, leave them alone together. Leave them alone —together!

[*They force* PHILIP *back to the door, where he stands glaring at* GHENT.]

Philip [*to* GHENT]. My time will come. Meanwhile, hide behind the skirts of the woman whose life you have ruined and whose heart you have broken. Hide behind her. It is the coward's privilege. Take it.

[PHILIP, *with* MRS. JORDAN *still clinging to his arm, goes out,* RUTH *closing the door after them. She and* GHENT *confront each other in silence for a moment, across the width of the room.*]

Ghent says he has never understood Ruth because he has never understood her people.

Ruth. She spoke the truth. I have always seen it.

Ghent. Ruth, it's a queer thing for me to be saying, but —it seems to me, you've never seen the truth between us.

Ruth. What is the truth—between us?

Ghent. The truth is——[*He pauses, then continues with a disconsolate gesture.*] Well, there's no use going into that. [*He fumbles in his pocket, and takes from it the nugget chain, which he looks at in silence for a time, then speaks in quiet resignation.*] I've got here the chain, that's come, one way and another, to have a meaning for us. For you it's a bitter meaning, but, all the same, I want you to keep it. Show it some day to the boy, and tell him—about me. [*He lays it on the desk and goes toward the door.*]

Ruth. What is the truth—between us?

Ghent. I guess it was only of myself I was thinking.

Ruth. What is it—about yourself?

Ghent [*after a pause*]. I drifted into one of your meeting houses last Sunday, not knowing where else to go, and I heard a young fellow preaching about what he called "The Second Birth." A year and a half ago I should have thought it was all hocus-pocus, but you can believe me or not, the way he went on he might have been behind the

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door that night in that little justice den at San Jacinto, saying to the Recording Angel: "Do you see that rascal? Take notice! There ain't an ounce of bone or a drop of blood in him but what's new man!"

Ruth. You think it has been all my fault—the failure we've made of our life?

Ghent. It's been no failure. However it is, it's been our life, and in my heart I think it's been—all—right!

Ruth. All right! Oh, how can you say that? [*She repeats the words with a touch of awe and wonder.*] All right!

Ghent. Some of it has been wrong, but as a whole it has been right—right! I know that doesn't happen often, but it has happened to us, because—[*he stops, unable to find words for his idea*]—because—because the first time our eyes met, they burned away all that was bad in our meeting, and left only the fact that we *had* met—pure good—pure joy—a fortune of it—for both of us. Yes, for both of us! You'll see it yourself some day.

Ruth. If you had only heard my cry to you, to wait, to cleanse yourself and me—by suffering and sacrifice—before we dared begin to live! But you wouldn't see the need! Oh, if you could have felt for yourself what I felt for you! If you could have said, "The wages of sin is death!" and suffered the anguish of death, and risen again purified! But instead of that, what you had done fell off from you like any daily trifle.

Ghent [*steps impulsively nearer her, sweeping his hand to indicate the portraits on the walls*]. Ruth, it's these fellows are fooling you! It's they who keep your head set on the wages of sin, and all that rubbish. What have we got to do with suffering and sacrifice? That may be the law for some, and I've tried hard to see it as our law, and thought I had succeeded. But I haven't! Our law is joy, and selfishness; the curve of your shoulder and the light on your hair as you sit there say that as plain as preaching. Does it gall you the way we came together? You asked me that night what brought me, and I told you whiskey, the sun, and the devil. Well, I tell you now I'm thankful on my knees for all three! Does it rankle in your mind that I took you when I could get you, by main strength and fraud? I guess most good women are taken that way, if they only knew it. Don't you want to be paid for?

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I guess every wife is paid for in some good coin or other. And as for you, I've paid for you not only with a trumpery chain, but with the heart in my breast, do you hear? That's one thing you can't throw back at me—the man you've made of me, the life and the meaning of life you've showed me the way to! [RUTH'S *face is hidden in her hands, her elbows on the table. He stands over her, flushed and waiting. Gradually the light fades from his face. When he speaks again, the ring of exultation which has been in his voice is replaced by a sober intensity.*] If you can't see it my way, give me another chance to live it out in yours. [*He waits, but she does not speak or look up. He takes a package of letters and papers from his pocket, and runs them over, in deep reflection.*] During the six months I've been East——

Ruth [*looking up*]. Six months? Mother said a week!

Ghent. Your sister-in-law's telegram was forwarded to me here. I let her think it brought me, but as a matter of fact, I came East in the next train after yours. It was rather a lowlived thing to do, I suppose, hanging about and bribing your servant for news. [RUTH *lets her head sink in her hands. He pauses and continues ruefully.*] I might have known that would strike you! Well, it would have come out sooner or later. That's not what I started to talk about. You ask me to suffer for my wrong. Since you left me I *have* suffered—God knows! You ask me to make some sacrifice. Well—how would the mine do? Since I've been away they've as good as stolen it from me. I could get it back easy enough by fighting, but supposing I don't fight. Then we'll start all over again, just as we stand in our shoes, and make another fortune—for our boy. [RUTH *utters a faint moan as her head sinks in her arms on the table. With trembling hands* GHENT *caresses her hair lightly, and speaks between a laugh and a sob.*] Little mother! Little mother. What does the past matter, when we've got the future—and him? [RUTH *does not move. He remains bending over her for some moments, then straightens up, with a gesture of stoic despair.*] I know what you're saying there to yourself, and I guess you're right. Wrong is wrong, from the moment it happens till the crack of doom, and all the angels in Heaven, working overtime, can't make it less or different by a hair.

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That seems to be the law. I've learnt it hard, but I guess I've learned it. I've seen it written in mountain letters across the continent of this life. Done is done, and lost is lost, and smashed to hell is smashed to hell. We fuss and potter and patch up. You might as well try to batter down the Rocky Mountains with a rabbit's heartbeat! [*He goes to the door, where he turns.*] You've fought hard for me, God bless you for it. But it's been a losing game with you from the first! You belong here, and I belong out yonder—beyond the Rockies, beyond—the Great Divide!

[*He opens the door and is about to pass out.* RUTH *looks up with streaming eyes.*]

Ruth. Wait! [*He closes the door and stands waiting for her to speak.* RUTH *masters herself and goes on, her eyes shining, her face exalted.*] Tell me you know that if I could have followed you, and been your wife, without struggle and without bitterness, I would have done it.

Ghent [*solemnly*]. I believe you would.

Ruth. Tell me you know that when I tore down with bleeding fingers the life you were trying to build for us I did it only—because—I loved you!

Ghent [*comes slowly to the table, looking at her with bewilderment*]. How was that?

Ruth. Oh, I don't wonder you ask! Another woman would have gone straight to her goal. You might have found such a one. But instead you found me, a woman in whose ears rang night and day the cry of an angry Heaven to us both—"Cleanse yourselves!" And I went about doing it in the only way I knew—[*she points at the portraits on the wall*]—the only way my fathers knew—by wretchedness, by self-torture, by trying blindly to pierce your careless heart with pain. And all the while you—Oh, as I lay there and listened to you I realized it for the first time—you had risen, in one hour, to a wholly new existence, which flooded the present and the future with brightness, yes, and reached back into our past, and made of it—made of all of it—something to cherish! [*She takes the chain, and comes closer.*] You have taken the good of our life and grown strong. I have taken the evil and grown weak, weak unto death. Teach me to live as you do! [*She puts the chain about her neck.*]

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Ghent [*puzzled, not yet realizing the full force of her words*]. Teach you—to live—as I do?

Ruth. And teach—him!

Ghent [*unable to realize his fortune*]. You'll let me help make a kind of a happy life for—the little rooster?

Ruth [*holds out her arms, her face flooded with happiness*]. And for us! For us!

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THE WITCHING HOUR

By Augustus Thomas

First played in New York at Hackett's Theatre on November 18, 1907.

Argument: Clay Whipple kills a man accidentally in the house of Jack Brookfield, a professional gambler, and is charged with murder by the assistant prosecutor, who is his rival in love. After being once convicted Clay gets a second trial, and while the jury are deliberating Brookfield attempts to bring the psychic force of the whole community to bear upon them in favor of the defendant. Will an acquittal result, and will the prosecutor take revenge on Brookfield?

The magnetic force with which the friends of Jack Brookfield believe him to be endowed in an extraordinary degree is discussed one night at his gambling house in Louisville when he has returned from the opera with a party of friends. He has warned the men to make no allusions to his profession in the presence of the ladies, who are his sister, Mrs. Alice Campbell, her daughter, Viola, and their friend, Mrs. Whipple. It is said that Mrs. Campbell and Viola share the magnetic gift.

The interior decorations of Brookfield's house were planned mainly by Mrs. Whipple's son, Clay, a boy of twenty. Clay, who is in love with Viola, has been made apprehensive by noticing that a rival was talking very earnestly to her during the opera. He proposes and is accepted. Mrs. Campbell and Mrs. Whipple are not surprised to learn of the engagement, but Mrs. Campbell feels it necessary to tell something that she has on her mind, and this is that Clay is gambling with Jack's friends.

Mrs. Whipple cannot understand how Jack could let

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her boy play, but her friend reminds her that Jack has not their feminine viewpoint. Mrs. Campbell has always made as hard a fight as she could against the gambling. She and Viola would not live there where playing was going on, even though Jack built the new house especially for them. She says there isn't a better-hearted nor an abler man than Jack Brookfield in the State, but she had her daughter to consider.

The man who was making love to Viola at the opera was Frank Hardmuth, the Assistant District Attorney. He asks Jack Brookfield for support. Jack tells him that he would not attempt to influence his niece, and finally is forced to charge Hardmuth with lack of moral fibre. Although he, Jack Brookfield, is a professional gambler, people get a square game from him, he says, but the people are not getting from Hardmuth just what the latter promised them as assistant prosecuting attorney. For one thing, Hardmuth plays in Jack's house, and has betrayed the secrets of the District Attorney's office to give Jack warning. Hardmuth wants to bet that he will be the next District Attorney.

Hardmuth. You like the moral fibre of this Whipple kid?

Jack. I don't know.

Hard. Weak as dishwater.

Jack. I don't think so.

Hard. I'll do him at any game you name.

Jack. He's only a boy—you should.

Hard. I'll do him at this game.

Jack. What game?

Hard. The girl. I thought I could count on you because—well, for the very tips you hold against me—but you're only her uncle, old man, after all.

Jack. That's all.

Hard. And if she says "yes——"

Jack. Frank! Some day the truth'll come out as to who murdered the Governor Elect of this State.

Hard. [*avoids his gaze*]. Is there any doubt about that?

Jack. Isn't there?

Hard. The man who fired that shot's in jail.

Jack. I don't want my niece mixed up in it.

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Hard. [*turns angrily and confronts* JACK]. What do you mean by that?

They are interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Whipple. Hardmuth leaves the room. Mrs. Whipple reproaches Jack for having let her boy gamble. Jack declares that when Clay plays it is no gamble; he always loses. That is what will discourage him from becoming a gambler. Jack never lets him get up from the table a dollar to the good. The boy will play till he gets sick of it or marries, Jack says, which would have cured him if Mrs. Whipple had seen it that way.

Helen. You made your choice.

Jack. I asked you to trust me—you wanted some ironclad pledge—well, my dear Helen—that wasn't the best way to handle a fellow of spirit.

Helen. So you chose the better way?

Jack. No choice—I stood pat—that's all.

Helen. And wasted your life.

Jack. That depends on how you look at it. You married a doctor that wore himself out in the Philadelphia hospitals. I've had three meals a day—and this place—and—a pretty fat farm and a stable with some good blood in it.

Helen. And every one of them, Jack, is a monument to the worst side of you.

Jack [*takes her hands*]. Prejudice, my dear Helen. You might say that if I'd earned these things in some respectable business combination that starved all its competitors—but I've simply furnished a fairly expensive entertainment—to eminent citizens looking for rest.

Helen. I know all the arguments of your—profession—Jack, and I don't pretend to answer them any more than I answer the argument of reckless women who claim that they are more commendable than their sisters who make loveless marriages.

Jack. I'm not flattered by the implied comparison—still——

She feels sure that anything which the majority of good people condemn is wrong. The value that she places on the public respect alone makes him sorry not to have it.

Helen. You called your conduct wild oats twenty years ago.

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Jack. It was—but I found such an excellent market for my wild oats that I had to stay in that branch of the grain business. Besides, it has been partly your fault, you know.

Helen plays with paper knife, balancing it on front edge of table.

Helen. Mine?

Jack. Your throwing me over for my wild oats—put it up to me to prove that they were a better thing than you thought.

Helen. Well—having demonstrated that——

Jack. Here we are——

Helen. Yes—here we are.

Jack. Back in the old town. Don't you think it would be a rather pretty finish, Helen, if despite all my—my leopard's spots—and despite that—that Philadelphia episode of yours——

Helen. You call twenty years of marriage episodic?

Jack. I call any departure from the main story episodic. You and I——

Her ideas have not been modified in twenty-two years. He would have to give up gambling entirely. He hopes she won't consider his hesitation uncomplimentary. It has opened up a new line of thought. A visitor is announced, Justice Prentice, who is unknown to Jack Brookfield, but who has traced a painting which he wishes to buy to Jack's possession.

The picture in question is a Corot. Jack points out its position over a bookcase. The visitor inquires if Mr. Brookfield is particularly attached to it. Jack is not irrevocably. He figures mechanically on a pad. The judge turns from the picture to Jack, inquiring if he is to understand the figure that Jack has just written is what he paid for the picture or what he wants for it. Startled, Jack asks what figure.

Prentice. Sixty-five hundred.

Jack [*astonished*]. I didn't speak the price, did I?

Pren. Didn't you—eh? [*Pause.*] I couldn't pay that amount.

The judge looks at other paintings, and remarks that he came upon a pretty idea in one of Doctor Van Dyke's essays recently, that his pictures were for him windows

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by which he looked out from his study upon the world. Then there is another illustration of telepathy between them. Justice Prentice says, in reply to a question that Jack had only framed in his mind, that his home is in Washington.

Jack. Do you often—pick answers that way?

Pren. Well, I think we all do—at times.

Jack. We all do?

Pren. Yes—but we speak the answers only as we get older and less attentive and mistake a person's thought for his spoken word.

Jack. A person's thought?

Pren. Yes.

Jack. Do you mean you know what I think?

Pren. I hadn't meant to claim any monopoly of that power. It's my opinion that every one reads the thoughts of others. That is, some of the thoughts.

Jack. Every one?

Pren. Oh, yes.

Jack. That I do?

Pren. [*regarding him*]. I should say you more generally than the majority of men.

Jack. There was a woman said something like that to me not ten minutes ago.

Pren. A woman would be apt to be conscious of it.

Jack. You really believe that—that stuff?

Pren. Oh, yes—and I'm not a pioneer in the belief. The men who do believe the stuff most stoutly are scientists who have given it most attention.

Jack. How do they prove it?

Pren. They don't prove it—that is, not universally. Each man must do it for himself, Mr. Brookfield.

Jack. How——

Pren. [*pause, smile*]. Well, I'll tell you all I know of it. [*Gets earnest.*] Every thought is active—that is, born of a desire—and travels from us—or it is born of the desire of some one else and comes to us. We send them out—or we take them in—that is all.

Jack. How do you know which we are doing?

Pren. If we are idle and empty headed, our brains are the playroom for the thought of others—frequently rather

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bad. If we are active, whether benevolently or malevolently, our brains are workshops—power houses. I was passively regarding the pictures your active idea of the price registered, that's all. So did you wish to know where I was from?

Justice Prentice regards Brookfield's mind as far more of a power house than the average, and tells him he has a strong hypnotic ability. He would like to hear from Brookfield if the latter tires of his Corot.

Tom Denning, one of the clients of the establishment, has been drinking a good deal and has found amusement in annoying young Whipple before the ladies. He possesses a curious cat's-eye scarfpin which, to his delight, inspires the boy with a peculiar aversion. He has persisted in holding the scarfpin close to Clay's face and telling him to look at it. While Brookfield is down at the door seeing the judge out, Denning relates these circumstances to Hardmuth. When Clay said he didn't like the pin, Denning replied that he didn't like Clay's face. Clay now enters the room.

Tom. And I don't like your face.

Clay. That's all right, Mr. Denning. [*Tries to pass.*] Excuse me.

Tom [*with scarfpin in hand*]. Excuse me. What's the matter with that scarfpin?

Clay. It's a cat's-eye and I don't like them, that's all —I don't like to look at them!

Lew. Let him alone, Tom.

Tom. Damn 'fee ain't scared of it, ha, ha. [*Pushing pin front of* CLAY'S *face.*]

Clay [*much excited*]. Don't do that.

Hard. [*sneering*]. 'Twon't bite you, will it?

Clay [*averts his face. More excitedly*]. Go away, I tell you.

Tom [*holds* CLAY *with left hand—has pin in right*]. 'Twill bite him—bow-wow-wow.

Clay. Don't, I tell you—don't!

Tom [*still holding him*]. Bow—wow—wow——

Hardmuth and Lew Ellinger try to call off Denning, but Denning follows Clay, saying "bow—wow" derisively. Clay turns suddenly and strikes Denning two or three quick blows just as Brookfield comes in, and then seizing

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a heavy ivory tusk from the table, swings it and sends Denning to the floor.

Ellinger stoops over the prostrate man, who is dead. Clay protests that he didn't mean to kill him, but that Denning persisted in sticking that horrible cat's-eye in his face and he couldn't stand it. Ellinger and a footman carry the body into an adjoining room as Mrs. Campbell comes in. She asks if there has been a quarrel. Hardmuth says it was a murder. Viola and her mother enter.

Clay [*in a panic*]. Oh, mother, I've killed him!

Helen [*taking* CLAY *in her arms*]. Killed him—whom?

Hard. Tom Denning.

Clay. But I never meant it—Jack, I just struck—struck wild.

Hard. With this.

Helen. With that! Oh, my boy.

Jack. That will do! Everybody—Lew, telephone Doctor Monroe it's an emergency case and to come in dressing-gown and slippers. [*Exit* LEW.] Alice, I know you're not afraid of a sick man—or—that sort of thing. Help me and Jo. Viola, you take Mrs. Whipple upstairs and wait there.

Hard. I'll notify the police.

Jack. Stop! You'll stay just where you are!

Hard. You tryin' to hide this thing?

Jack. The doctor'll tell us exactly what this thing is. And then the boy'll have the credit himself of notifying the police.

Judge Prentice is playing chess in the library of his home in Washington with Judge Henderson, who suggests that they play the rubber to decide the Whipple case. Henderson holds that the defence is right in asking for a rehearing, because, in limiting the attendance, the sheriff favored the prosecution. Prentice considers the administration of justice in Kentucky much too slow as it is. He reminds his colleague that the murderer of the Governor Elect is still at large after two years.

Before Henderson leaves Prentice shows him a miniature of an old sweetheart, of whom he has been reminded by lines in Bret Harte's story, "A Newport Legend." He reads the lines, which are these:

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"And ever since when the clock strikes two,
She walks unbidden from room to room,
And the air is filled that she passes through
With a subtle, sad perfume.
The delicate odor of mignonette
The ghost of a dead and gone bouquet
Is all that tells of her story—yet
Could she think of a sweeter way?"

Although it is midnight, a caller is announced. It is Jack Brookfield of Louisville. He has come to Washington with two ladies who are very anxious to meet Judge Prentice. They will have no time except to-night, and Brookfield has told them to follow him to the house in five minutes. The judge says he will receive them with pleasure.

Brookfield thanks him for two books on the subject of telepathy which the judge sent him. The author of one of the books has conducted some experiments on the subject with Judge Prentice, who caused the author to call him on the telephone at 2 A. M. one night by a telepathic appeal. Since the judge started him on the subject, Brookfield has been trying some experiments in mesmerism and has made people tell him what a boy was doing a mile away—in a jail.

The two ladies arrive. As Brookfield is about to introduce Mrs. Whipple she says she would like to introduce herself. She shows Judge Prentice an autograph book in which he wrote his name many years before. Upon taking the book he finds it to contain a letter that he wrote in 1860 to Margaret Price, Mrs. Whipple's mother. He shows her the miniature of her mother on the table, and she warns him not to touch the spray of mignonette in the autograph book lest it crumble.

The letter refers to a duel which Prentice fought with a man who had annoyed Margaret Price. He half recalls that she was frightened by some such thing as a snake or a toad. Mrs. Whipple corrects him. Her mother was frightened by a jewel, she says, and he remembers that it was a cat's-eye.

Viola. Compose yourself, dear. Remember what depends on it.

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Pren. It is evidently something in which I can aid you.

Helen. It is—and you will?

Pren. There is nothing I would not do for a daughter of Margaret Price. You are in mourning, dear lady, is it for your mother?

Helen. For my son.

Pren. [*to* JACK]. How long has he been dead?

Helen. He is not dead. Judge Prentice, my boy—the grandson of Margaret Price—is under a sentence of death.

Pren. Sentence of death?

Helen. Yes. I am the mother of Clay Whipple.

Pren. [*rises*]. But, Madam——

Helen. He is to die. I come——

Pren. [*retreating*]. Stop! You forget yourself. The case of Whipple is before the Supreme Court of the United States, and I am a member of that body—I cannot listen to you.

Helen. You must!

Pren. [*near door*]. You are prejudicing his chances. [*To* JACK.] You are making it necessary for me to rule against him. [*To* HELEN.] My dear Madam, for the sake of your boy, do not do this. It is unlawful—without dignity of precedent. If the lady were not the mother of the boy I should call your conduct base——

Viola. But she is his mother.

Helen. And, Judge Prentice, I am the daughter of the woman you loved.

Pren. I beg you to be silent.

Jack. Won't you hear us a moment?

Pren. I cannot. I dare not—I must leave you. [*Going.*

For him to hear her on a point before the court, he says, would be corrupt, but she assures him that she does not wish to speak to him on that point, but of the fact that her mother's aversion to the jewel amounted almost to insanity. Mrs. Whipple inherited the aversion. When she was a child the sight of such a jewel would almost throw her into a convulsion. Her son inherited the same weakness. These circumstances, urged in Clay's defence at the trial, were disposed of as invention.

Judge Prentice now informs Mrs. Whipple that just before she called Judge Henderson convinced him that the

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case should be retried on account of the constitutional point that had been raised. On the rehearing, he says, he will take pleasure in testifying as to this hereditary aversion. He catches the scent of mignonette, and Mrs. Whipple gives him a handkerchief from the autograph book which belonged to Margaret Price. Left alone, he says to himself that the spirit of Margaret Price was in the room and redirected a decision of the Supreme Court of the United States. He puts the handkerchief to his lips and repeats the lines:

> The delicate odor of mignonette
> The ghost of a dead and gone bouquet—
> Is all that tells of her presence yet
> Could she think of a sweeter way?

When the fate of Clay Whipple has gone to a jury after a second trial, Jack Brookfield, instead of awaiting the verdict at the courthouse, is sitting at home deep in thought. His sister comes in to ask him to go to Mrs. Whipple and Viola. He tells her that one juror at least is their friend. If he should join Helen and Viola he could no longer be with that juror. She does not understand.

Jack. Judge Prentice told me that he could sit alone in his room and make another man get up and walk to the telephone and call him by simply thinking steadily of that other man.

Alice. Superstitious people imagine anything.

Whatever she likes to call the power, he has tried it and knows it works. The other night when she knocked on his door at 2 o'clock to ask if he was ill he made her do it. Two Sundays before he had made her return home when she had reached the church door. Alice thinks he is making a mistake to be sitting at home and trying silly mind-cure methods when bitter vindictive lawyers are prosecuting Clay. He replies that he cannot go and thrash them in the courtroom.

A negro servant announces Mr. Hardmuth. He, Jack says, is one of the bitter vindictive men she referred to, and he is going to meet him face to face. Hardmuth enters. He asks to see Jack alone. Mrs. Campbell leaves them. Hardmuth has just been told by Harvey Fisher,

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a newspaper man, that Jack Brookfield has hinted at something associating him with the shooting of Scovil, the Governor Elect.

Jack. Right.

Hard. What do you mean?

Jack. I mean, Frank Hardmuth, that you shan't hound this boy to the gallows without reckoning with me and the things I know of you——

Hard. I'm doing my duty as a prosecuting attorney.

Jack. You are and a great deal more. You're venting a personal hatred.

Hard. That hasn't anything to do with this insinuation. You've handed to a newspaper man an insinuation for which anybody ought to kill you.

Jack. I don't deal in "insinuations." It was a charge.

Hard. A statement?

Jack. A charge! You understand English—a specific and categorical charge.

Hard. That I knew Scovil was to be shot.

Jack. That you knew it? No. That you planned it and arranged and procured his assassination.

Hard. [*in low tones*]. If the newspapers print that I'll kill you—damn you, I'll kill you!

Jack. I don't doubt your willingness. And they'll print it—if they haven't done so already—and if they don't print it, by God, I'll print it myself and paste it on the fence.

Hard. [*weakening*]. What have I ever done to you, Jack Brookfield, except to be your friend?

Jack. You've been much too friendly. With this murder on your conscience you proposed to take to yourself as wife—my niece—dear to me as my life—as revenge for her refusal and mine, you've persecuted through two trials the boy she loved and the son of the woman whose thought regulates the pulse of my heart—an innocent, unfortunate boy—in your ambition you've reached out to be the Governor of this State, and an honored political party is seriously considering you for that office to-day.

Hard. [*facing* JACK *angrily*]. That Scovil story's a lie—a political lie. I think you mean to be honest, Jack Brookfield, but somebody's strung you.

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Jack. Wait—the man that's now hiding in Indiana—a fugitive from your feeble efforts at extradition, sat upstairs drunk and desperate—his last dollar on a case card. I pitied him—if a priest had been there he couldn't have purged his soul cleaner than poor Raynor gave it to me—if he put me on—am I strung?

Hard. [*frightened*]. Yes, you are—I can't tell you, because this jury is out and may come in any moment and I've got to be there—but I can square it. So help me God, I can square it.

Jack. You'll have to square it.

Enter ALICE *followed by* PRENTICE.

The announcement which Jack has made regarding Hardmuth comes at the psychological moment, as a convention is now in session at which he may be nominated for Governor. If Clay's last chance lay in an appeal to the Governor, and that Governor were Hardmuth, there would be no hope.

As it is not expected that the jury will come to a decision very soon, Mrs. Whipple comes to the house with Mrs. Campbell and Viola. While they are with Jack word is brought to him that Hardmuth has seen the newspaper with the story about him and will shoot on sight.

Lew Ellinger reports that the newspaper story is causing more high feeling than anything that ever happened. It created a rumpus at the convention at Frankfort during which blows were struck and pistols were drawn. Lew has made a bet that Jack never spoke the words attributed to him.

Jack. Yes!—I did say it.

Lew. In just these words [*Reads.*] "The poor fellow that crouched back of a window sill and shot Kentucky's Governor deserves hanging less than the man whom he is shielding—the man who laid the plot of assassination. The present prosecuting attorney by appointment—Frank Allison Hardmuth." Did you say that?

Jack. Lew, that there might be no mistake—I wrote it. [LEW *whistles.* JACK *takes the paper and scans it.*]

Lew. Is it straight?

Jack. Yes. [*Pushes hanging button and turns off big light.*]

Lew. He was in the plot to kill the Governor?

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Jack. He organized it.

Lew. Well, what do you think of that? And now he's runnin' for Governor himself—a murderer!

Jack. Yes.

Lew [*going to* PRENTICE]. And for six months he's been houndin' every fellow in Louisville that sat down to a game of cards—— [JACK *nods.*] The damned rascals nearly put me in the poorhouse——

Jack. Poor old Lew.

Lew. Why before I could get to that courthouse today I had to take a pair of scissors that I used to cut coupons with and trim the whiskers off of my shirt cuffs.

It was a secondary consideration to affect the convention, says Jack. His main object was the jury. The thirty thousand people in Louisville who have read the charge against Hardmuth, and the five hundred thousand in the little cities and the towns are at white heat over this knowledge, and the effect of their united thought, he believes, will kill the jury's faith in Hardmuth. Judge Prentice holds the same opinion. He declares that in every widely discussed trial the defendant is tried by the entire community.

Lew thinks that the public will believe that Jack attacked Hardmuth for closing his game. It was not Hardmuth who closed the game, however, Jack assures him, but Judge Prentice, by giving his self-respect a slap on the back.

At this moment Clay is seen approaching the house. Judge Prentice exclaims that he has been acquitted. Clay comes in with Colonel Bayley, his attorney. The women weep as Colonel Bayley announces that Clay is free. Clay takes Viola in his arms. The first moment of excitement over, the women escort Clay to the dining-room to feed him. Jack and Judge Prentice are alone together in the room when Hardmuth enters abruptly. He rushes forward and turns to Jack.

Hard. You think you'll send me to the gallows, but, damn you, you go first yourself. [*Puts derringer to* JACK'S *belly.*]

Jack. Stop! [*Flashes big light on. At* JACK'S "*stop*" PRENTICE *inclines forward with eyes on* HARDMUTH, *so that there is a double battery of hypnotism on him. Pause.*]

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You can't shoot—that—gun. You can't pull the trigger. [*Pause.*] You can't even hold that gun. [HARDMUTH *drops gun.*]

Jack. Now, Frank, you can go.

Hard. [*recoiling*]. I'd like to know—[*pause*]—how in hell you did that—to me.

That evening Clay and Viola have the big living-room to themselves. It is getting late when a reporter calls. He says that there is a warrant out for Hardmuth, and if he is captured the newspaper wants Clay to report the trial. Clay feels that he could not do it. The reporter says that Mr. Brookfield has been named for Governor in the caucus. Urged by Jack, Clay overcomes his aversion to the cat's-eye pin.

Lew Ellinger comes in to say that he has got wind of Hardmuth's whereabouts, although detectives have failed to do so. A newspaper is going to offer a reward for the fugitive, and as the State will do likewise, Ellinger is counting on getting the money that he needs to meet a note. Hardmuth is hiding in the cottage of a negro who used to work for his mother, but one of the household has betrayed him to Ellinger. Hardmuth will be hard to get, Ellinger says, as he has two guns and will shoot before giving up.

Jack says he will send Clay to get Hardmuth; Clay's mother enters a vigorous protest.

Helen. Clay knows nothing of that kind of work—a man with two guns—think of it.

Jack. After he's walked bare-handed up to a couple of guns a few times he'll quit fearing men that are armed only with a scarfpin.

Helen [*hysterically*]. It's cruel to keep constantly referring to that—that mistake of Clay's—I want to forget it.

Jack [*goes to* HELEN. *Tenderly*]. The way to forget it, my dear Helen, is not to guard it as a sensitive spot in your memory, but grasp it as the wise ones grasp a nettle—crush all its power to harm you in one courageous contact—we think things are calamities and trials and sorrows. They are only names. They are spiritual gymnastics and have an eternal value. When once you front them and

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JOHN MASON AS JACK BROOKFIELD

Jack. You can't shoot—that—gun. You can't pull the trigger

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make them crouch at your feet—say once for all to your soul and thereby to the world: "Yes, my boy killed a man —because I'd brought him up a half-effeminate, hysterical weakling, but he's been through the fire and I've been through the fire, and we're both the better for it."

Lew says that Hardmuth will come in the belief that Jack is going to help him. It's a pretty hard double cross, of course, but Hardmuth deserves it. Furthermore, Lew has to meet a note for fifteen thousand the next day. He can't get the rewards in time for that, but if Jack will lend him the money the rewards are a guarantee to Jack. Jack responds by writing a check for the amount. He says Lew has lost a hundred thousand to him and needn't pay back the fifteen. Lew suggests playing for the fifteen then and there, but Jack says no.

After a pause Jack tells Lew to shuffle a pack of cards and deal them poker hands. They put up a thousand. Jack looks thoughtfully into the fire, and then asks Lew if he happens to have three queens. Lew looks at Jack, then at the back of his own cards. They are not marked, and he shuffled them all right. He asks Jack how he knew he had three queens.

Jack. I didn't know it. I just thought you had.

Lew. Can you do it again?

Jack. I don't know. Draw one card.

Lew [*drawing*]. All right.

Jack [*pause*]. Is it the ace of hearts?

Lew. It is.

Jack. M'—turns me into a rotter, doesn't it?

Lew. Can you do that every time?

Jack. I never tried it until to-night—that is consciously—I've always had luck and I thought it was because I took chances on a game—same as any player—but that don't look like it, does it?

Lew. Beats me.

Jack. And what a monster it makes of me—these years I've been in the business.

Lew. You say you didn't know before.

Jack. I didn't know it—no—but—some things have happened lately that have made me think it might be so—that jury yesterday—some facts I've had from Judge Prentice. Telepathy of a very common kind—and I

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guess it's used in a good many games, old man, we aren't on to.

Lew is thrown into some excitement. He knows of a game in Cincinnati where Jack could gather coin like taking candy from children. Jack is a little horrified at the suggestion. Lew is willing to do the collecting if Jack will show him the trick. Jack leans against the table and says slowly that some of the men he has won from have gone over in the park and blown their heads off.

Lew betrays a flutter of excitement when Clay comes in with Hardmuth, who asks if Jack wrote the note that he has received. Jack did.

Hard. You say you'll help me get out of the State?

Jack. I will.

Hard. When?

Jack. Whenever you're ready.

Hard. I'm ready *now!*

Jack. Then I'll help you now.

Lew. Now?

Jack. Yes.

Helen. Doesn't that render you liable in some way, Jack—to the law?

Jack. Yes—but I've been liable to the law in some way for the last twenty years. [*To* CLAY.] You go down and tell the chauffeur to leave the machine and walk home—I am going to run it myself and I'll turn it in.

Hardmuth asks if there will be any one waiting where Jack is going to take him, and if all this is on the level. It is hard for him to believe it. Lew thinks he has something to say about the affair. He doesn't see Jack's game. Jack tells him he isn't fully convinced of Hardmuth's guilt. He cuts Hardmuth short in his protestations of innocence, asks if he is fed and supplied with money, and then tells the negro butler to take him below and lend him a fur coat.

Helen. What does it all mean, Jack?

Jack. Lew, I called that ace of hearts, didn't I?

Lew. And the three queens.

Jack. Because the three queens and the ace were in your mind.

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Lew. I don't see any other explanation.

Jack. Suppose instead of the cards there'd been in your mind a well-developed plan of assassination—the picture of a murder——

Lew. Did you drop to him that way?

Jack. No, Raynor told me all I know of Hardmuth—but here's the very hell of it. Long before Scovil was killed I thought he deserved killing and I thought it could be *done* just as it was done.

Helen. Jack.

Jack. I never breathed a word of it to a living soul, but Hardmuth planned it exactly as I dreamed it—and by God, a guilty thought is almost as criminal as a guilty deed—I've always had a considerable influence over that poor devil that's running away to-night, and I'm not sure that before the Judge of both of us the guilt isn't mostly mine.

Helen. That's morbid, Jack dear, perfectly morbid.

Jack. I hope it is—we'll none of us ever know—in this life—but we can all of us—— [*Pause.*]

Lew. What?

Jack. Live as if it were true. [*Change of manner.*] I'm going to help him over the line—the roads are watched, but the police won't suspect me and they won't suspect Lew, and all the less if there's a lady with us—will you go? [*To* LEW.]

Lew. The limit.

Jack. Got a heavy coat from Jo.

Lew. Yes. [*Exit.*

Jack. You know you said I used to be able to make you write to me when I was a boy at college.

Helen. Yes.

Jack. And you were a thousand miles away—while this fellow—Hardmuth, was just at my elbow half the time.

Helen. It can't help you to brood over it.

Jack. It can help me to know it, and make what amend I can. Will you go with me while I put this poor devil over the line?

Helen. Yes, I'll go with you.

Jack. Helen, you stood by your boy in a fight for his life.

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Helen. Didn't you?

Jack. Will you stand by me while I make my fight?

Helen [*giving her hand*]. You've made your fight, Jack, and you've won. [JACK *kisses her hand, which he reverently holds in both of his.*]

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PAID IN FULL

By Eugene Walter

First played in New York at the Astor Theatre on February 22, 1908.

Argument: Joe Brooks, attributing his failure of advancement to injustice instead of to his lack of ability, misappropriates funds which he believes he can recoup by gambling. Detected in his wrong-doing and panic-stricken at the imminence of punishment, he asks his wife to intercede with his employer by trading on her charms. What sort of a bargain the young woman will propose, the terms that the employer will exact, and the future relations of Joe with the girl who married him for love remain to be solved.

The discontent of Joe Brooks usually finds free expression when he is helping his wife wash the dishes in their little Harlem flat. He is a rather good-looking fellow, twenty-seven or twenty-eight years old. He has become disgusted with his position as a collector for the Latin-American Steamship Company. When he married Emma Harris he confidently expected that the influence of her father, who was general manager of the company, would insure his advancement, but Mr. Harris died soon after their marriage and he has not risen. Emma accepts the situation cheerfully, although her mother and younger sister, Beth, regard her struggle as nothing short of martyrdom.

As he clears the dining-room table with a gingham apron tied about him, Joe's bitterness is uppermost. He has just been denied an increase of salary to which he believes himself entitled. At the same time some of the other employees have received increases in pay, among them Jim Smith, or "Jimsy," who was a close competitor for Emma's

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hand until her romantic nature asserted itself unmistakably. Emma begs Joe not to keep asking if she doesn't feel that she made a mistake; she married for love and wishes he would leave unsaid the things that might make her regret it.

The housework is scarcely done when Jimsy calls. Joe continues his complaint in the presence of their friend. More than half the money of the line passes through his hands, he says, and yet he slaves for a miserable living. He calls Captain Williams, the owner of the line, a niggardly beast. He could steal thousands and nobody would ever know it, he says. Of course he isn't going to, but when he asks for a raise not only he doesn't get it but Captain Williams comes around with his mother-in-law as if for the express purpose of adding insult to injury. Emma thinks Captain Williams means well.

Joe [*ironically*]. That's it, he means well. He meant well when he was a South Pacific trader. He meant well when he treated his crew like dogs. He meant well when he'd kill a sailor with as much thought as a spider kills a fly. He meant well when he cheated natives, murdered men, smuggled Chinamen into this country, sunk vessels for insurance; he meant well when he came East, bought the Latin-American Company and put your father out of business, and now—now that he has his money, his millions, he means well when he refuses to give his men a fair share of what they produce. Means well—yes, he does—not!

Emma. Joe, are you crazy? Whatever is the matter?

Jimsy. Well, there's a whole lot of truth in what Joe said. You see Williams did start out as a captain of a South Pacific trader, but like most of them fellows I guess he stole a good deal more than he traded. He had the reputation of being the strongest man on the coast or in the tropics—he could break a man's arm with as much ease as you'd snap a straw. He's harsh, Williams is—harsh. When he came East he got control of the Latin-American. He loved money and he got it—most any way he could. Yes, Joe ought to have more, that's sure. He ought to have more.

Captain Williams often takes Emma's mother and sister motoring, and, as it happens, brings them around

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this evening. Joe goes out the back way when they are announced. Captain Williams finds the flat very cozy, but Beth calls it a little bit of a stuffed-up place. She would die in such a one. Jimsy remarks that perhaps she will. Mrs. Harris says quite plainly that she can't see how Emma stands the drudgery. Captain Williams, as if feeling bound to justify himself, declares that he is not close; business is business. If he has money nobody gave it to him.

Mrs. Harris. And that's right. I believe in men getting money. My late husband was one of those soft-hearted men who never made the best of his opportunities—always trying to be fair and square with other men, and what was the result? His will was a disappointment.

Emma. Mother, please——

Mrs. H. It's true. If he hadn't been that way do you suppose you'd be here, doing your own work?

Emma. Mother, I insist—you must not——

Beth. Mother is perfectly right. Emma, you don't deserve this kind of life.

Emma. But have I complained? Why do you say such things?

Mrs. H. [*half to herself*]. Because I've got myself to think of—you're wasting yourself. Tied up to the house all the time—and everybody, all my friends, know just how you are fixed. You're never invited anywhere any more.

Beth. Completely forgotten.

Emma. Please don't—it's my affair—and besides, before people——

Mrs. H. Oh, well, you might say the Captain's one of the family since your father died. I knew you never should have married Joe. That he couldn't take care of you the way you ought——

Joe comes in. He throws down his hat and faces them all. Emma gets up and Jimsy also rises. Joe turns to Captain Williams.

Joe. I'll tell you why—you damned slave driver.

Emma. Joe!

Jimsy [*placing his hands on* JOE'S *shoulder*]. Steady, Joe, boy——

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Joe. No, leave me alone. [*Shakes him off.*] It's because that man—[*points to the captain*]—isn't on the square.

Emma. Joe!

Captain Williams, after a slight start, settles in his chair. As Joe proceeds to denounce him his eyes narrow to mere slits, his mouth compressed, consumed by a mighty rage.

Joe. He began cheating by murdering niggers who worked for him aboard his rotten trading ships. Then after he got through with the belaying pin, after he'd got his money, he picked up the salary list for a club, and now he maims and murders with that. [*Goes nearer the Captain.*] My wife here is only one of hundreds, and she suffers? [*To* MRS. HARRIS *and* BETH.] It *is* too bad she married me. It is too bad she's got to do her own work; it is too bad that she's got to wash and scrub in the heat, but that man's to blame. [*To the Captain.*] If you gave me a fair share of what I produce, if you didn't grind down, oppress, and pinch she wouldn't have to—I've worked for you for five years, hard, honest, and all the time you've been grinding me down, down, and thousands of others, thousands—and now——

Emma. Joe!

Joe. Oh, you all know—all of you! [*To the Captain.*] You've piled up your money on the blood and sweat and misery of others. That's the kind of man you are, and you might as well know it—to hell with you—to hell with you!

Captain Williams arises and gathers all the tremendous strength he possesses. The alarm of all is manifest. The expression of his face is one of evil malignancy. Joe shrinks back, but his wife stands firm, then rushes between them. Jimsy takes a step forward.

Williams [*advancing a step*]. There ain't no one ever said them things to me and got away with it. [*He takes another step. It is evident he is going to crush* JOE.]

Emma [*standing between them*]. Please—please—Captain, for my sake——

Joe [*shrinking back in a dogged manner*]. I don't care—let him come on——

Captain Williams looks at Emma. His attitude changes.

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TULLY MARSHALL AS JOE BROOKS AND PHIL SHERIDAN AS CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

Williams. All right, Mrs. Brooks—I almost forgot—I apologize

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His muscles relax and a faint smile twitches the corner of his mouth.

Williams. All right, Mrs. Brooks—I almost forgot—I apologize.

Emma. Joe! Joe! You know it's our home.

Joe [*sulkily*]. I—I—forgot—— Excuse me!

Jimsy tries to smooth things over. Mrs. Harris and Beth leave hastily. Joe and the Captain have resumed their seats, Joe keeping his eye on the Captain. Then Joe rises, tries to speak, comes near crying, and goes out, slamming the door. Captain Williams expresses regret at what has happened. He says he may have been a little hard, but he has had a hard life with hard men since the day he shipped before the mast in a North Pacific sealer. He learned that the only thing that stands between blows, rotten grub and scurvy on the one hand, and comfort and decency on the other, was money.

Two months later Joe and his wife occupy an apartment in a semi-fashionable hotel. Emma wears very pretty gowns, and is radiant with the happiness brought by a great change in material circumstances. To her the best thing of all is that Joe has succeeded. She tells Beth that she will never forget the night when Joe came home with the news that his salary has been nearly tripled, and that he had also received three months back pay at the new rate.

Captain Williams has gone to South America and taken Jimsy with him. It is not known when they will return. Emma says that Joe seems worried, and she supposes it is because he is anxious to succeed in his new position. It appears that Joe is greatly interested in the races but declares he never bets on them.

Emma, her mother, sister, and Joe are together when the telephone rings. Emma answers it and then says that she has a surprise to announce. Jimsy has come back, six weeks before he was expected. Mrs. Harris hopes that Captain Williams has come with him, and so does Emma. She wants to thank him for Joe's raise.

Joe tells Emma sharply she must do nothing of the kind. He wants them all to understand that his business is his business. He doesn't want it discussed with either Smith

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or Williams. What he's got he's got, and it's nobody's affair but his. If any one of them has anything to say about him or what he does he tells them to say it now or shut up. Mrs. Harris is very indignant at being spoken to in such a manner.

Jimsy puts them off when they ask about the Captain. He tells a long story about an incipient revolution in Guatemala before finally admitting that he supposes Captain Williams is on the way home. Mrs. Harris and Beth go into another room to put on their hats and Emma accompanies them. Then Jimsy tells Joe flatly that he has been found out.

Joe [*jumping up*]. How found out?

Jimsy. The money you've taken.

Joe [*taking a step toward him*]. If you say I've taken money, you're a liar!

Jimsy [*rises*]. Joe, Joe, this ain't no time to four flush with me. I'm your friend, boy, and you need one now, besides, there's Emma to think of.

Joe [*choking*]. I don't know what you mean.

Jimsy. Williams has been home three days. He has had the books looked over at night.

Joe turns pale. Jimsy says the Captain seemed to know what Joe was doing from the time he took the first dollar; apparently he went away to give Joe a free rein and thereby get even for what Joe said that night in the flat. He says the situation is very bad, but that he is going to stick by him. Detectives are on the watch and Joe can't run away.

Mrs. Harris and Beth are going to the theatre, and Joe starts with them to escort them. Jimsy is left with Emma, and he undertakes to prepare her mind for what she must learn sooner or later. First he tells her something of his own origin in Colorado. It is rather uncertain, and the fact is that not knowing his father's name he took that of Smith. Other fellows sometimes are unfortunate, he says, in having a hereditary fault, a weakness that grows on them and never can be stopped. They think they are doing the best they can at the very time when they are going to the bad. She thinks that paradoxical.

Jimsy. No—for instance—out in Denver I knew a fellow married a girl who'd always had pretty much what

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she wanted, but he'd been in hard luck. It was a love match all right, both parties being clean foolish over each other. Well, he didn't get on and she had to work pretty hard. Finally he thought her health and spirits were about busted up on account of the work and he commenced appropriating other folks money—got way in and the harder he tried to get out the deeper he got in—Finally the big exposure came off. He was a thief. Now what do you think about him, Emma? D'ye think because he was long on love and short on honor he was *all* bad, eh?

Emma. Well, I've always hated a thief and a liar. I know there's an awful lot of dishonesty—in business, but father declared that a man to drink or gamble and dissipate might be weak, but a man who stole or lied to injure people was vicious—somehow I think that, too.

Jimsy. Well, maybe you're right, but I wondered if you'd been in his wife's place if you wouldn't have sort of forgiven the man, and helped him get right. [*Pause.*] Well, you didn't blame me for what I couldn't help—so why should you blame him?

Captain Williams is announced. Jimsy gets no further. Captain Williams says he has come to see Joe and will wait for him to return. Emma tells him that Joe seems a little worried about business, and that she thinks he feels the responsibility of his new position. The Captain declares he shall have a chance to make good, and very soon at that.

Now that it's out, Emma thanks him for the raise and six months back pay. The Captain wants to know if Joe told her that. Jimsy puts in that of course Joe did, and tells Emma not to let the Captain fool her.

Captain. Well, I must be a real nice little fellow!

Emma. Oh, you don't know how happy it's made us all—I feel like a new woman, and mother appreciates it, too.

Captain. Well, seems that I done all these things——

The door opens and Joe enters. He is startled at finding himself face to face with the Captain. Emma explains how she happened to thank Captain Williams for the raise. Joe asks stammeringly if they are trying to make fun of him.

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Captain. Now, now, now—Brooks—you sure are nervous. Your wife has just been telling me—how she enjoys your *new income.* [*There is a moment of embarrassment. The Captain surveys the room.*] You sure are fixed up mighty snug here, Mrs. Brooks.

He says he is glad to see her so happy. He never did know before what a little money means to a woman. He asks Joe to get down to the office early the next morning. He is afraid that now Joe is prosperous he may oversleep. He takes his leave. Jimsy gets a chance to warn Joe not to tell Emma yet, but Joe has gone to pieces and blurts out a confession. He says the money they have been living on he stole from the company, and the Captain knows.

Jimsy for once is at a loss what to say. Emma doesn't realize what it all means at first.

Emma [*slowly in a suppressed voice*]. Joe—you mean, that you——

Joe [*brokenly*]. I'm a thief. They know it. Detectives are downstairs now. To-morrow I'll be in jail.

There is a long silence. Emma takes a step toward Joe.

Jimsy. You see, Emma, Joe here ain't so much to blame, he——

Emma. No, Jimsy. Please go. I—want to be with Joe—alone.

Jimsy. Just as you say, Emma. Just as you say. I'll do all I can to-night and let you know—maybe it'll be all right.

Emma. I know, Jimsy—good-night.

Jimsy goes out and Emma stands for a moment looking at Joe, and then goes to him and places both hands on his shoulders.

Emma [*in a broken voice*]. Oh, Joe—my boy, how could you do it—didn't you know sooner or later you'd be found out? Now I know why you've been interested in the races—you've been betting on the horses.

Joe. I wanted to get the money back.

Emma. But didn't you know you couldn't? Oh, why didn't you leave things as they were—in the flat, the poverty—and all that? Why did we come here and try to live in all this—this happiness with money that you stole?

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Joe [*pushing her away*]. That's right—you call me a thief! If there was one person in the world I thought I could depend on it's you—and you turn on me.

Emma. Joe, you mustn't say that; I haven't turned on you. Only I can't help but think——

Joe [*rises*]. What? That Williams drove me to taking the money.

Emma. Drove you?

Joe. Yes, he did. It was a trap. I expected you to stand by me. Do you realize the hole I'm in?—There are three Central Office men down there, watching. If I make a move I'll be nabbed. [*He walks about wildly as he talks.*] It's all very well for you to stop and preach—you always were so damned saintly, but what of me? [*Coming up to her.*] That's the question, what of me?

Emma. If I thought you were yourself, I'd never forgive you for saying that to me.

Joe. I'm not asking your forgiveness, nor your mother's nor your sister's. [*Sits at the table.*] What I want is some one to help me out—I don't want to go to jail—it would kill me.

Emma. Do you think I want you to go to jail? Do you think I want the disgrace?

Joe [*rises*]. The disgrace—that's it. There's always some one to hammer that into a fellow when he's down.

Emma. I'm not trying to hammer anything into you—what I want to know is what can be done.

Joe. I don't know.

Emma suggests getting help from Jimsy, but Joe says the amount of money is too large. Besides, he thinks Williams means business and wouldn't take the money. She says if she had only known when Captain Williams was there she might have spoken to him about it. Joe says it is not too late to do that. She can't telephone, but Joe says she can go to see him; she can square the thing, and she is the only one who can.

Emma. I can?

Joe. Yes, you—and no one *but* you—*you! you!*

Emma. Why, what can I do?

Joe. He likes you. [*She looks at him, startled. He grasps her arm.*] Yes, he does, he always did. Women are his weak point. He's liked you for years, that's why

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he hangs around. I've seen it, and you heard what he said to-night about what he'd do for a girl like you. He meant that, Emma—he'll do anything you ask him if—— [EMMA *begins to understand.*] If you go to him right. He's home now. You can go.—No one will know but just Williams, you and me.

She rises slowly. Her eyes blaze and she is consumed with rage.

Emma. Do I understand what you mean?

Joe. No one will know the difference—you can handle him all right——besides, you know how far you can let a man go with safety—all women know that. [*There is a pause.*] Well? Then you won't do it?—You won't come to the front? I suppose you don't think I ought to ask. Why shouldn't I? Who did I steal the money for—I did it because you made me.

Emma. That's not true.

Joe. It's the truth and you know it. When I married you, your father was to help me, but he died and then you had to do your own work and you whined and complained.

Emma. That's a lie!

Joe. Oh, not in so many words, but I saw it.—For four years around the house I saw you sighing and moping because you didn't have enough to live on—then that mother of yours and your sister—they never stopped. You tried to make yourself a martyr. Every moment of your life was a mute protest against our poverty.

Emma. That's another lie!

Joe. Yes, it was, and you know it. Do you remember that night when you said you couldn't go to the theatre because you didn't have the clothes? That was the first time I took money. That's when I began.

Emma. You know I wouldn't have gone if I'd known.

Joe. But you did go—you kept on going and I kept on *stealing* for you—for *you.* For the clothes on your back! God! how I've suffered! For you—now I'm going to jail. I'm going up there on the river for years because you won't do your part.

Emma. I can't.

Joe. Why can't you? Other women have for less reason—one right here in this town to get control of a

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trans-continental railroad for her husband. I've risked everything for you. If you go there to-night I won't go to jail—I won't be hauled into court, no one will know, but the three of us. I've gone through to the limit for you. It's up to you to go through for me.

Emma. Now that I see you in all your contemptible meanness—[JOE *rises*]—I wonder how I ever made the mistake of thinking you even half a man.

Joe. Oh, you can't dodge the responsibility with fine speeches. I've done this for you. Now, what are you going to do? Be square with me and take this chance—you know you're safe.

Emma. Then you mean that if you go to jail I have sent you there?

Joe. Yes, and down in your heart you know you have.

Emma. Now, whatever I do, if I do anything at all, I do it simply because you blame me.

Joe [*attempts to take her hand*]. Emma, I knew you'd——

Emma. Don't! Don't make the mistake of thinking I care for you—whatever I felt for you, and I thought it was love—you've killed it in the last ten minutes, but I don't want you to go to jail pointing a finger of accusation at me.

Joe. Then you'll be square, you'll help? You'll go—you'll——

Emma. You understand that if I bargain with Captain Williams for your freedom I make the bargain——

Joe. Yes, I know—I'll never ask.

Emma. It will be my business alone.

Joe. Yes, just yours.

Emma. Is he home?

Joe. Yes. He must be.

Emma [*standing by the table rigidly and cold as ice*]. Telephone and ask if he can see me—now—alone——

Joe looks at her hesitatingly, cringing a bit, and takes down the receiver. He keeps his eye on her as he thrusts his handkerchief into the mouthpiece.

Captain Williams's den is furnished mainly with relics of his travels in the Southern Pacific, shields, spears, a ship's wheel and capstan and models of several ships.

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The room has the appearance of being ill-cared for. The Captain's Japanese servant is willing enough, but the Captain dislikes to have things disturbed.

Captain Williams comes in and answers the telephone. Mrs. Brooks is at the other end of the line, and he tells her that he is at home and will wait to see her. Then he dismisses his servant, advising him to take a very long walk and not to be in any hurry about coming back. He writes a short note, lays it on the capstan head, which serves as a table, and waits. The servant has hardly gone when Jimsy enters. Captain Williams informs him bluntly he is expecting an important visitor and he must make his business short.

Jimsy recounts how Brooks lost his nerve and told his wife everything. He wants to know how much Brooks has taken. The Captain says it was sixteen thousand eight hundred and fifty dollars. Jimsy wants to square it. Captain Williams doesn't see where Jimsy comes into the affair, and Jimsy returns that that is none of the Captain's business. The Captain refuses. He is going to open negotiations with another party, Mrs. Brooks herself, he says, and perhaps they shall come to some mutually pleasant arrangement that will keep Brooks out of jail. Also, this plain speaking is a hint that Jimsy had better be on his way.

Jimsy [*going toward the door*]. I've known Emma—Mrs. Brooks ever since she was in short clothes and used to come down to the office to go home with her daddy——

Williams. So I've heard.

Jimsy. She's always been able to look up into my face with them big brown eyes o' hers and smile. When I get back from Boston I'm going to make it my business to see her——

Will. All right . . .

Jimsy. And if she shouldn't be able to look up into my face and smile, I'm coming to find you, Williams, and I'm coming heeled.

Will. What particular style o' heel are you wearing now, Smith?

Jimsy. Well, if you should consult the particular shoemaker who furnishes 'em, he'd describe that heel as a .45 Colt.

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When Mrs. Brooks comes the Captain is very sociable. He insists on spinning yarns and won't let her come to Joe's trouble. He urges her to drink a little something, as it is a warm evening, but she sticks to the point.

Will. There you go, talking business again. Mrs. Brooks, I so seldom have the pleasure of your company that this "business thing" knocks all the romance out of your visit.

Emma. I didn't intend there should be any romance in it, Captain Williams.

Will. Mrs. Brooks, a sailor man always finds romance in an evening spent with a pretty woman.

She tells him that she has come to plead with him to save Joe and herself from disgrace. She says he must have some respect for the memory of her father, and perhaps he can find some way out of the difficulty. She hasn't the money, and has no suggestion to make.

Will. Your husband sent you here, didn't he?—What did he say to you?

Emma. He told me that I might have some influence with you.

Will. Put the blame on you for stealing the money, didn't he?

Emma [*astonished*]. How did you know that?

Will. I know the man! Didn't he?

Emma. Yes.

Will. Told you, didn't he, that you could fix it up to call everything off?

Emma. Yes, that's what he said.

Will. Um, and that if you *didn't* come *you'd* have to take the *blame* for him going to the penitentiary?

Emma. Yes—it—it—*was something* like that.

She asks if there isn't some way that she can help Joe honorably.

Will. What if I make the proposition that's in your mind, and was in the mind of that sneaking husband of yours when he sent you over to me to see if I'd make the price sixteen thousand dollars? What would you do then, eh? What if I looked you over and was pleased and thought you cheap at that figure? Eh? You say I've killed men? Yes, I have. I've wrung their necks with this hand like you'd sling a chicken in the air. I said you

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was the first lady to come in here. Maybe I made a mistake, but if I did I'll find it out before you leave this room. I've talked—now you talk.

Emma says that now she knows the Captain is everything people say he is, but she is not afraid of him. Her husband can offer her for sale and the Captain can stand there ready to buy her, but she has something to say about it.

Emma. Even if I wanted to place myself on the market I couldn't. But I'm not afraid of you, or of him or of any one. We're alone—you can lock that door. I won't scream nor cry. So you've killed men, have you? Well, now, Captain Williams, is your first chance to kill a woman, for that's just exactly what you'll have to do.

Will. I knew you were that kind of a woman. I banked on you being good, and you are good. I know women. I've bought mine all over the world, from Hindoos to Chinese, but I paid for 'em and they was always willing to sell. There ain't but two kinds, the good and the bad. There's no half way. When they're bad they're bad through and through, can't be good, and when they're good they're all good—and next to heaven. I figured you good, and if you hadn't been it would have hit me and hit me hard. Why, young woman, you're safer here than you would be with your mother! For I'd fight for you, and don't you forget I'd fight hard.

Emma is bewildered. She staggers slightly and grasps a chair for support. The Captain tells her he has been watching her husband for a long time and always knew that sooner or later he would go to the bad and try to take her with him. He reads her the note that he has written and laid on the capstan. It says:

"Your resignation is accepted. I wish to thank you for your services and to assure you that your accounts with the Latin-American Steamship Company have been audited and found to be correct."

The Captain tells Emma that if she had acted otherwise than as she did she wouldn't have had that note. He says it is worth what it has cost him and a whole lot more for him to know a good woman.

Jimsy comes back and is pleased at the smile that Emma gives him. As he starts to take her home Captain Wil-

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liams advises her to pay a whole lot of attention to Jimsy. When they have left, he says:

Will. Damned if it ain't good to be decent!

Joe Brooks has been in a fever of suspense during his wife's absence and has reached the depths of despondency by the time she returns. Meanwhile, Mrs. Harris and Beth come back and scold him for not taking them home from the theatre. He had forgotten all about it. They are surprised to find that Emma has gone out alone and have a good deal to say about their disapproval.

Finally Emma enters, followed by Jimsy. She looks haggard and nearly exhausted. Joe's anxiety immediately increases. She doesn't even notice him. She asks her mother and Beth to go, and again Jimsy comes in handy as an escort. Emma and Joe are left together. He thinks that she has failed in her mission, and for a moment is so overcome that he is unable to speak. He goes up to her. She faces him and he turns away. He flings himself in a chair despairingly. He has guessed all, that the Captain will not help him.

She hands him the paper given her by the Captain. As soon as he has read it he exclaims that she has saved him and tries to take her in his arms. She pushes him gently away and tells him that she is going to her mother's; that it is impossible for her to live with him any longer. He declares she can't go that way, without explanation, and asks how she induced Williams to agree.

Emma. You've no right to ask that. The price I paid for that letter is none of your business.

Joe. It is my business. I want to know and I will know.

Emma. When you sent me to Captain Williams I told you that if I made the bargain I was to make it alone. Now, I gave you your freedom—you give me mine. [*She opens the door.*]

Joe [*closes the door sharply*]. There is only one reason why you should leave here and now, and that is Williams. Are you going back to him?

Emma steps back from him with an expression of disdain. She says that she thought he had sunk as low as he could when he sent her to Williams, but that now she sees

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she was mistaken. He insists that he will not let her leave until she tells the truth about Williams. She tells him that he was the only person who had her degradation in mind. Since he insists on frankness, she wants him to try to appreciate the truth as well as he is able.

She is the only person, she says, who didn't realize how worthless he is. When they were married she thought she loved him. Now it seems utterly beyond belief. She sees that he has always been dishonest at heart. He married her to help himself, and tried to disgrace her to help himself. She thought she could help him to be big by helping him to bear the little things of life. She failed, and all she has left is the memory that he is a failure. He lets her go without further protest.

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THE SCARECROW OR THE GLASS OF TRUTH*

By Percy MacKaye*

First played in New York at the Garrick Theatre on January 17, 1911.

Argument: With the aid of diabolical arts, Goody Rickby makes a Scarecrow which comes to life and sends it to court the niece of Justice Merton in order to avenge an old injury which the Justice did her twenty years earlier. The young girl's deception by the sham gallant and the Justice's fear of exposure if he fails to promote the match appear to insure "Lord Ravensbane's" success. Will the witchcraft be unmasked and the witch punished?

In this play Mr. MacKaye gives a new turn to the generic satire on pretentiousness by enlisting sympathy for the hero and revealing the underlying "tragedy of the ludicrous." Furthermore, he makes the Scarecrow a symbol of the disparity between man as he is and the ideal of human perfection.

In the gray light of dawn Goody Rickby finished the scarecrow, a creature of iron frame, fit to dominate the cornfield in the face of the fiercest blast. Although it was the age when old crones were sometimes burned as witches in Massachusetts towns, according to the legend, Goody Rickby did not hesitate to adopt suggestions whispered to her from time to time by the Prince of Darkness as she wrought dauntlessly at the anvil. Finally the demon, with growing relish for the task, steps out from the glowing forge and adds the finishing touches with his own hands.

Goody Rickby seems well acquainted with her helper, whom she addresses familiarly as Dickon, and it is with warm approval that she sees him put a pumpkin head on

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the frame and thrust a red beet in his bosom by way of a heart. Then they dress the figure in a gold-embroidered coat with ruffles of lace and a pair of fine scarlet breeches. But Dickon suddenly grows dim and fades away into the air as a young girl, Rachel Merton, the niece of Justice Gilead Merton, draws near.

At sight of the effigy, Rachel is inspired with loathing. She has come to buy a certain ancient mirror which Goody Rickby calls the Glass of Truth, claiming it shows folks as they are without their shams and varnish. "A witches' word is as good as a Justice's gold," says she, concluding the bargain.

Not long after Rachel has gone the stout figure of the Justice himself darkens the doorway. He accuses the old woman of having attainted his niece with her diabolical arts, and swears she shall hang as a witch. A mocking voice answers him from the air. The Justice begins to tremble, and as Dickon appears before him he withdraws the threat, nor does he tarry long thereafter.

Twenty-one years earlier, Gilead Merton had betrayed Goody Rickby and abandoned her with a child that was not destined to grow up. Dickon now acclaims the scarecrow as the Justice's son, and the future affianced of Mistress Rachel. With passes and incantations he brings the strange figure to life. It is a weak vitality, however, that the scarecrow has at best, and he remains animated only so long as he puffs at an old corncob pipe that Dickon has stuck in his mouth.

Rachel has placed the Glass of Truth in her uncle's parlor, and there confronts her betrothed, Richard Talbot, with its reflection of his image, but the glass delineates both of the young people faithfully, just as they have always appeared to each other. Presently two strangers are announced. Dickon enters with the scarecrow, which he presents as Lord Ravensbane, Marquis of Oxford, Baron of Wittenberg, Elector of Worms and Count of Cordova, apologizing for the pipe, which he explains is necessary to his Excellency's health.

Rachel's eyes no sooner meet those of Ravensbane than she is completely fascinated. Thenceforth she ignores her bethrothed. Ravensbane's mission is to ask for

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Rachel's hand in marriage. The Justice, highly flattered at first, is terrified when Dickon informs him that his lordship's mother is the Marchioness of Rickby, instantly divining that Ravensbane is his son. Two courses are open to the Justice, either to further Ravensbane's suit for the hand of his niece, or to face exposure.

It is evident that clothes make the man. Ravensbane is held in great awe, and his idiotic babbling is accepted as courtly address.

Justice Merton [*low and vehement to* RAVENSBANE.] Imposter!

Ravensbane [*still staring at the door.*] She is gone.

Justice M. You at least shall not play the lord and master to my face.

Ravens. Quite—gone!

Justice M. I know with whom I have to deal. If I be any judge of my own flesh and blood—permit me—you shall quail before me.

Ravens. [*dejectedly*]. She did not smile—— [*Joyously.*] She smiled!

Justice M. Affected rogue! I know thee. I know thy feigned pauses, thy assumed vagaries. Speak; how much do you want?

Ravens. Bethrothed—he went away. That was good. And then—she did not smile: that was not good. But then—she smiled! Ah! that was good.

Justice M. Come back, coward, and face me.

Ravens. First, the great sun shone over the cornfields, the grass was green; the black wings rose and flew before me; then the door opened—and she looked at me.

Justice M. Speak, I say! What sum? What treasure do you hope to bleed from me?

Ravens. [*ecstatically*]. Ah! Mistress Rachel!

Justice M. Her! Scoundrel, if thou dost name her again, my innocent—my sweet maid! If thou dost—thou godless spawn of temptation—mark you, I will put an end—— [*Reaching for a pistol that rests in a rack on the wall—the intervening form of Dickon suddenly appears, pockets the pistol, and exits.*]

Dickon. I beg pardon; I forgot something.

Justice M. [*sinking into a chair*]. God is just. [*He holds his head in his hands and weeps.*]

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Ravens. [*for the first time, since* RACHEL'S *departure, observes* MERTON]. Permit me, sir, are you ill?

Justice M. [*recoiling*]. What art thou?

Ravens. [*monotonously*]. I am Lord Ravensbane, Marquis of Oxford, Baron of Wittenberg, Elector of Worms, and——

Justice M. And my son! [*Covers his face again.*]

Ravens. [*solicitously*]. Shall I call Dickon?

Justice M. Yea, for thou art my son. The deed once done is never done, the past is the present.

Ravens. [*walking softly toward the door, calls*]. Dickon!

Justice M. [*starting up*]. No, do not call him. Stay, and be merciful. Tell me: I hate thee not; thou wast innocent. Tell me!—I thought thou hadst died as a babe. Where has Dickon, our tyrant, kept thee these twenty years?

Ravens. [*with gentle courtesy*]. Master Dickonson is my tutor.

Justice M. And why has thy mother—— Ah, I know well; I deserve all. But yet, it must not be published now! I am a justice now, an honored citizen—and my young niece—— Thy mother will not demand so much; she will be considerate; she will ask some gold, of course, but she will show pity!

Ravens. My mother is the Marchioness of Rickby.

Justice M. Yes, yes; 'twas well planned, a clever trick. 'Twas skilful of her. But surely thy mother gave thee commands to——

Ravens. My mother gave me her blessing.

Maddened by Ravensbane's obstinacy, the Justice wrenches the pipe from his mouth. Ravensbane falls fainting but is succored by Rachel and Dickon, who restore the corncob to his lips. They unbutton his coat and the embroidered waistcoat is disclosed. Justice Merton blanches. The waistcoat had belonged to himself. His sister, Mistress Merton, also recognizes it, for it was she who worked it.

Dick. My lord, Mistress Rachel has saved your life.

Ravens. [*taking* RACHEL'S *hand*]. Mistress Rachel is mine; we are ours.

Richard. Dare to repeat that.

Ravens. [*looking at* RACHEL]. Her eyes are mine.

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Rich. [*flinging his glove in his face*]. And that, sir, is yours. I believe such is the proper fashion in England. If your lordship's last duelling wound is sufficiently healed, perhaps you will deign a reply.

Rachel. Richard! Your lordship!

Ravens. [*stoops, picks up the glove, pockets it, bows to* RACHEL, *and steps close to* RICHARD]. Permit me! [*He blows a puff of smoke full in* RICHARD'S *face.*]

A glimpse is given of Dickon coaching his lordship on useful phrases and elegant discourse. Ravensbane is thoroughly wound up when Richard's second, Captain Bugby, arrives. He insists on fighting with flails, and Captain Bugby apologizes for laughing at his principal's expense. Rachel, however, exacts from Ravensbane a promise that there shall be no duel. She offers to show him the Glass of Truth, but Dickon diverts them for the moment.

Mistress Merton has drawn the conclusion from the evidence of the embroidered waistcoat that Lord Ravensbane is the son of her brother whom she had been led to believe had died in infancy. She warns Richard and dispatches him to buy off Goody Rickby.

Guests come to meet his Excellency, among them Sir Charles Reddington, the Lieutenant Governor, his two daughters, Captain Bugby, Minister Dodge and his wife, and the Rev. Masters Rand and Todd of Harvard College. Justice Merton announces the condescension of his lordship in consenting to regale the company with a song.

Ravens. [*Starting, turns to the company*]. Permit me.

[DICKON *sits, facing left, at the virginals. At first his fingers in playing give sound only to the soft tinkling notes of that ancient instrument; but gradually, strange notes and harmonies of an ærial orchestra mingle with, and at length drown, the virginals. The final chorus is produced solely by fantastic symphonic cawings, as of countless crows, in harsh but musical accord. During the song* RICHARD *enters.* DICKON'S *music, however, does not cease but fills the intervals between the verses. To his accompaniment, amid the whispered and*

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gradually increasing wonder, resentment, and dismay of the assembled guests, RAVENSBANE, *with his eyes fixed upon* RACHEL, *sings*]:

Baron von Rabenstod arose
(The golden sun was rising);
Before him flew a flock of crows:
Sing heigh! Sing heigh! Sing heigh! Sing—

"Ill speed, ill speed thee, baron-wight;
Ill speed thy palfrey pawing!
Blithe is the morn but black the night
That hears a raven's cawing."
[*Chorus.*]
Caw! Caw! Caw!

Mistress Dodge [*whispers to her husband*]. Did you hear them?

Minister Dodge. Hush!

Amelia [*sotto voce*]. What *can* it be?

Captain Bugby. Oh, the latest, be sure.

Dick. You note, my friends, the accompanying harmonics; they are an intrinsic part of the ballad, and may not be omitted.

Ravens. [*sings*]:

The baron reckèd not a pin
(For the golden sun was rising);
He rode to woo, he rode to win;
Sing heigh! Sing heigh! Sing heigh! Sing—

He rode into his prince's hall
Through knights and damsels flow'ry:
"Thy daughter, prince, I bid thee call;
I claim her hand and dowry."

Enter RICHARD. MISTRESS MERTON *seizes his arm nervously.*

Mistress Merton [*aside*]. Well?

Rich. Gold will not buy her. She defies us.

Sir Charles [*to* CAPTAIN BUGBY]. This gentleman's playing is rather ventriloquistical.

Captain. B. Quite, as it were.

Rev. Master Todd. This smells unholy.

Rev. Master Rand [*to* TODD]. Shall we leave?

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Justice M. [*sternly to* RICHARD, *who has attempted to talk with him aside*]. Not now.
Rich. Pardon me—it *must* be now.
Justice M. Squire Talbot——
Rich. [*very low*]. Sir—I come from Goody Rickby.
Justice M. Hush!
[*They go apart.*]
Ravens. [*sings*]:
"What cock is this, with crest so high,
That crows with such a pother?"
"Baron von Rabenstod am I;
Methinks we know each other."
"Now welcome, welcome, dear guest of mine,
So long why didst thou tarry?
Now, for the sake of auld lang syne,
My daughter thou shalt marry."

Justice M. [*to* RICHARD]. Spare me, I am helpless.
Rich. What! you will sacrifice her?
Justice M. What can I do?
Rich. Tell her the truth at least.
Justice M. Never, Richard, no, no, never that!
Amelia [*to* BUGBY]. And he kept right on smoking!
Minister D. [*who, with* RAND *and* TODD, *has risen uneasily*]. This smacks of witchcraft.
Rev. Master R. The Justice seems moved.
Ravens. [*sings*]:
The bride is brought, the priest as well
(The golden sun was passing);
They stood beside the altar rail;
Sing ah! Sing ah! Sing ah! Sing—

"Woman, with this ring I thee wed."
What makes his voice so awing?
The baron by the bride is dead:
Outside the crows were cawing.

Chorus.

[*Which grows tumultuous, seeming to fill the room with the invisible birds.*]
Caw! Caw! Caw!
[*The guests rise in confusion.* DICKON *still plays delightedly, and the strange music continues.*]

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Minister D. This is no longer godly—Justice Merton!

Rich. [*to* JUSTICE MERTON]. I told you, sir, that witchcraft, like murder, will out. If you want further proof I believe I can provide it.

Minister D. Justice Merton, sir!

Ravens. [*to* RACHEL, *who holds his tassel in her hand*]. Ah! and you have my tassel!

Rach. See! I will wear it now. You yourself shall fasten it.

Ravens. Rachel! Mistress!

Rach. My dear lord!

[*As* RAVENSBANE *is placing the silken tassel on* RACHEL'S *breast to fasten it there,* RICHARD, *by the mirror, pulls the curtain back.*]

Rich. Lovers! This is the Glass of Truth. Behold yourselves!

Rach. [*looking into the glass, screams and turns her gaze fearfully upon* RAVENSBANE]. Ah! Do not look!

Dick. [*who, having turned round from the virginals, has leapt forward, now turns back again, biting his finger*]. Too late!

[*In the glass are reflected the figures of* RACHEL *and* RAVENSBANE—RACHEL *just as she herself appears, but* RAVENSBANE *in his essential form of a scarecrow, in every movement reflecting* RAVENSBANE'S *motions. The thing in the glass is about to pin a wisp of corn-silk on the mirrored breast of the maiden.*]

Ravens. What is there?

Rach. [*looking again, starts away from* RAVENSBANE]. Leave me! Leave me!—Richard!

Ravens. [*gazing at the glass, clings to* RACHEL *as though to protect her*]. Help her! See! It is seizing her.

Rach. Richard! [*She faints in* RICHARD'S *arms.*]

Ravens. Fear not, mistress, I will kill the thing. [*Drawing his sword, he rushes at the glass. Within, the scarecrow, with a drawn wheel-spoke, approaches him at equal speed. They come face to face and recoil.*] Ah! ah! fear'st thou me? What art thou? Why, 'tis a glass. Thou mockest me? Look, look, mistress, it mocks me! O God, no! no! Take it away. Dear God, do not look!—it is I!

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All [*rushing to the doors*]. Witchcraft! Witchcraft!

[*As* RAVENSBANE *stands frantically confronting his abject reflection, struck in a like posture of despair, the curtain falls.*]

Night finds Ravensbane alone, prostrate before the mirror, where he was deserted by the guests. He rises on one arm to a half-sitting posture and gazes fixedly at the image of the scarecrow, vaguely revealed by the moonlight.

Ravens. All have left me—but thou. Rachel has left me; her eyes have turned away from me; she is gone; and with her, the great light itself from heaven has drawn her glorious skirts, contemptuous from me—and they are gone together. Dickon, he, too, has left me—but not thou . . . [*recoiling wildly*]. Stand back, inanity! Thrust not thy mawkish face in pity toward me. Ape and idiot! Scarecrow!—to console me! Ha! ha!—A flail and broomstick! a cob, a gourd, and pumpkin, to fuse and sublimate themselves into a mage-philosopher, who puffeth metaphysics from a pipe and discourseth sweet philanthropy to itself—itself, God! Dost Thou hear? Itself! For even such am I—I whom Thou madest to love Rachel. Why, God—ha! ha! dost Thou dwell in this thing? Is it Thou that peerest forth *at* me—*from* me? Why, hark then: Thou shalt listen, and answer—if Thou canst. Hark then, Spirit of life! Between the rise and setting of a sun I have walked in this world of Thine. I have gazed upon it, I have peered within it, I have grown enamoured, enamoured of it. I have been thrilled with wonder, I have been calmed with knowledge, I have been exalted with sympathy. I have trembled with joy and passion. Power, beauty, love have ravished me. Infinity itself, like a dream, has blazed before me with the certitude of prophecy; and I have cried, "This world, the heavens, time itself, are mine to conquer," and I have thrust forth mine arm to wear Thy shield forever—and lo! for my shield Thou reachest me a mirror—and whisperest: "Know thyself! Thou art—a scarecrow: a tinkling clod, a rigmarole of dust, a lump of ordure, contemptible, superfluous inane!" Haha! Haha! And with such scarecrows Thou dost people a planet! O ludicrous! Monstrous! Ludicrous! At least, I thank Thee, God! at least, this

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breathing bathos can laugh at itself. At least this hotch-potch nobleman of stubble is enough of an epicure to turn his own gorge. Thou hast vouchsafed to me, Spirit—hahaha!—to know myself Mine, mine is the consummation of man—even self-contempt! [*Pointing in the glass with an agony of derision.*] Scarecrow! Scarecrow! Scarecrow!

The Image in the Glass [*more and more faintly*]. Scarecrow! Scarecrow! Scarecrow!

[RAVENSBANE *throws himself prone upon the floor, beneath the window, sobbing. There is a pause of silence, and the moon shines brighter.—Slowly then* RAVENSBANE, *getting to his knees, looks out into the night.*]

The image says he is Ravensbane's soul.

Ravens. Thou liest.

Image. Our Daddy Dickon and our mother Rickby begot and conceived us at sunrise, in a jack-o'-lantern.

Ravens. Thou liest, torturing illusion. Thou art but a phantom in a glass.

Image. Why, very true. So art thou. *We* are a pretty phantom in a glass.

Ravens. It is a lie. I am no longer thou. I feel it; I am a man.

Image. And prithee, what's a man? Man's but a mirror,
Wherein the imps and angels play charades,
Make faces, mope, and pull each other's hair—
Till crack! the sly urchin Death shivers the glass,
And the bare coffin boards show underneath.

Ravens. Yea! if it be so, thou coggery! if both of us be indeed but illusions, why, now let us end together. But if it be not so, then let *me* for evermore be free of thee. Now is the test—the glass! [*Springing to the fireplace, he seizes an iron cross-piece from the andirons.*[I'll play your urchin Death and shatter it. Let see what shall survive! [*He rushes to strike the glass with the iron.* DICKON *steps out of the mirror, closing the curtain.*]

Dick. I wouldn't, really!

Ravens. Dickon! dear Dickon! is it you?

Dick. Yes, Jacky! it's dear Dickon, and I really wouldn't.

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Ravens. Wouldn't what, Dickon?

Dick. Sweep the cobwebs off the sky with thine aspiring broomstick. When a man questions fate, 'tis bad digestion. When a scarecrow does it, 'tis bad taste.

Ravens. At last, *you* will tell me the truth, Dickon! Am I then—that thing?

Dick. You mustn't be so sceptical. Of course you're that thing.

Ravens. Ah me despicable! Rachel, why didst thou ever look upon me?

Dick. I fear, cobby, thou hast never studied woman's heart and hero-worship. Take thyself now. I remarked to Goody Bess, thy mother, this morning, as I was chucking her thy pate from the hay-loft, that thou wouldst make a Mark Antony or an Alexander before night.

Ravens. Thou, then, didst create me!

Dick. [*bowing*]. Appreciate the honor. Your lordship was designed for a cornfield; but I discerned nobler potentialities: the courts of Europe and Justice Merton's *salon.* In brief, your lordship's origins were pastoral, like King David's.

Ravens. Cease! cease! in pity's name. You do not know the agony of being ridiculous.

Dick. Nay, Jacky, all mortals are ridiculous. Like you, they were rummaged out of the muck; and like you, they shall return to the dunghill. I advise 'em, like you, to enjoy the interim, and smoke.

GOODY RICKBY *enters.*

Goody Rickby. There's not a minute to lose. Justice Merton and the neighbors have ended their conference at Minister Dodge's, and are returning here.

Dick. What! coming back in the dark? They ran away in the daylight as if the ghosts were after 'em.

Rickby [*at the window*]. I see their lanterns down the road.

Dick. Well, let 'em come. We're ready.

Rickby. But thou toldst me they had discovered——

Dick. A scarecrow in a mirror. Well? The glass is bewitched; that's all.

Rickby. All? Witchcraft is hanging—that's all! Come, how shall the mirror help us?

Dick. 'Tis very simple. The glass is bewitched.

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Mistress Rachel—mind you—shall admit it. She bought it of you.

Rickby. Yea, of me; 'twill be me they'll hang.

Dick. Good! then the glass is bewitched. The glass bewitches the room; for witchcraft is catching and spreads like the smallpox. *Ergo*, the distorted image of Lord Ravensbane; *ergo*, the magical accompaniments of the ballad; *ergo*, the excited fancies of all the persons in the room. *Ergo*, the glass must needs be destroyed, and the room thoroughly disinfected by the Holy Scriptures. *Ergo*, Master Dickonson himself reads the Bible aloud, the guests apologize and go home, the Justice squirms again in his merry dead past, and his fair niece is wed to the pumpkin.

Dickon assures the old woman that she will be safe as soon as the Justice's niece is her daughter-in-law. The people are heard coming back and she leaves hastily. Ravensbane revolts, but Dickon subdues him by threatening to make Rachel suffer. The company come in, the men carrying lanterns. They are looking for the witch.

Dickon lays the entire blame on Goody Rickby, and says that it was she who bewitched the mirror and the virginals on which he played. She, he says, commanded a devil to appear in the mirror in his lordship's guise. All start off in pursuit of her except Richard, Rachel, Justice Merton, Dickon and Ravensbane. Dickon again threatens the Justice with exposure, but when he addresses Rachel, Ravensbane interferes.

Ravens. [*approaching her, raises one arm to screen his face*]. Gracious lady! let fall your eyes; look not upon me. If I have dared remain in your presence, if I dare now speak once more to you, 'tis because I would have you know—Oh, forgive me!—that I love you.

Rich. Sir! This lady has renewed her promise to be my wife.

Ravens. Your wife, or not, I love her.

Rich. Zounds!

Ravens. Forbear, and hear me! For one wonderful day I have gazed upon this, your world. The sun has kindled me and the moon has blessed me. A million forms —of trees, of stones, of stars, of men, of common things— have swum like motes before my eyes; but one alone was

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wholly beautiful. That form was Rachel: to her alone I was not ludicrous; to her I also was beautiful. Therefore, I love her. You talk to me of mothers, mistresses, lovers, and wives and sisters, and you say men love these. What is love? The sun's enkindling and the moon's quiescence; the night and day of the world—the *all* of life, the all which must include both you and me and God, of whom you dream. Well then, I love you, Rachel. What shall prevent me? Mistress, mother, wife—thou art all to me!

Rich. My lord, I can only reply for Mistress Rachel, that you speak like one who does not understand this world.

Ravens. O God! Sir, and do you? If so, tell me—tell me before it be too late—why, in this world, such a thing as *I* can love and talk of love. Why, in this world, a true man and woman, like you and your betrothed, can look upon this counterfeit and be deceived.

Rach. and Rich. Counterfeit?

Ravens. Me—on me—the ignominy of the earth, the laughing-stock of the angels!

Rach. Why, my lord. Are you not——

Ravens. No.

Justice M. [*to* RAVENSBANE]. Forbear! Not to her——

Dick. My lord forgets.

Rach. Are you not Lord Ravensbane?

Ravens. Marquis of Oxford, Baron of Wittenberg, Elector of Worms, and Count of Cordova? No, I am *not* Lord Ravensbane. I am Lord Scarecrow! [*He bursts into laughter.*]

Rach. [*shrinking back*]. Ah me!

Ravens. A nobleman of husks, bewitched from a pumpkin.

Rach. The image in the glass was true?

Ravens. Yes, true. It is the glass of truth—thank God! Thank God for you, dear.

Justice M. Richard! Go for the minister; this proof of witchcraft needs be known.

[RICHARD *does not move.*]

Dick. My lord, this grotesque absurdity must end.

Ravens. True, Dickon! This grotesque absurdity must end. The laughter and the laughing-stock, man and

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the worm, possess at least one dignity in common: both must die.

Dick. [*speaking low*]. Remember! if you dare—Rachel shall suffer for it.

Ravens. You lie. She is above your power.

Dick. Still, thou darest not——

Ravens. Fool, I dare. [*Turning to* RACHEL.] Mistress, this pipe is I. This intermittent smoke holds, in its nebula, Venus, Mars, the world. If I should break it—Chaos and the dark! And this of me that now stands up will sink jumbled upon the floor—a scarecrow. See! I break it. [*He breaks the pipe in his hands, and flings the pieces at* DICKON'S *feet in defiance; then turns, agonized to* RACHEL.] Oh, Rachel, could I have been a man——!

Dick. [*picking up the pieces of pipe, turns to* RACHEL]. Mademoiselle, I felicitate you; you have outwitted the devil. [*Kissing his fingers to her, he disappears.*]

Mistress M. [*seizing the Justice's arm in fright.*] Satan!

Justice M. [*whispers*]. Gone!

Rach. Richard! Richard! support him.

Rich. [*sustaining* RAVENSBANE, *who sways*]. He is fainting. A chair!

Rach. [*placing a chair, helps* RICHARD *to support* RAVENSBANE *toward it*]. How pale; but yet no change.

Rich. His heart, perhaps.

Rach. Oh, Dick, if it should be some strange mistake! Look! he is noble still. My lord! my lord! the glass——

[*She draws the curtain of the mirror, just opposite which* RAVENSBANE *has sunk into the chair. At her cry, he starts up faintly and gazes at his reflection, which is seen to be a normal image of himself.*]

Ravens. Who is it?

Rach. Yourself, my lord—'tis the glass of truth.

Ravens. [*his face lighting with an exalted joy, starts to his feet, erect, before the glass*]. A man! [*He falls back into the arms of the two lovers*]. Rachel! [*He dies.*]

Rach. Richard, I am afraid. Was it a chimera, or a hero?

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THE RETURN OF PETER GRIMM

By David Belasco

First played in Boston at the Hollis Street Theatre on January 2, 1911.

Argument: Peter Grimm, with the kindest intentions toward those he loves, proves himself in reality a domestic despot by separating his niece from her lover and exacting a promise from her that she will marry her cousin. The old man is an ardent adherent of spiritualism, and dies in the firm belief that he shall be able to return and witness the happiness of those he has left. Will he come back, discover the havoc he has done, and make amends?

Among a number of modern plays having spiritualism for theme, including Sardou's "Spiritisme," "The Return of Peter Grimm" is the only one that proved a success. The title rôle, offering an exceptional opportunity for the portrayal of a strongly characterized old man, was exquisitely handled by David Warfield.

It is the fixed determination of Peter Grimm, himself an old bachelor, to bring about the marriage of his nephew and niece, Frederik and Catherine, that the old estate which has been handed down by his ancestors from the time of the first Dutch settlers, together with his flourishing horticultural trade, may be transmitted to future generations of Grimms. Catherine keeps house for him, and Frederik has lately returned from Holland where he has studied at the University of Leiden.

Peter is a man of sixty, simple and plain in his ways, gentle and sympathetic, but with a streak of Dutch stubbornness that is typified by his style in dress, which he has not changed in thirty years. He has watched over Catherine with a jealous eye, scaring off suitors, and letting it be understood that his nephew alone is to be his heir.

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Frederick has acquired fine manners abroad, and is especially courteous to ladies, but at heart he is a surly fellow, and he is secretly planning to frustrate all his uncle's designs at the earliest possible moment by selling the place to the highest bidder and pursuing elsewhere a life of pleasure.

Quite unsuspected by Peter, another lover is established close at hand, in the household in fact, in the person of his secretary, James Hartman, who has grown up from boyhood in his service. James is rather blunt in manner, bad hand at paying compliments, and does not follow the fashions, but is honest and sincere.

When Peter tells James that Catherine is to marry Frederik, James suggests that people cannot be mated like tulips, but assured that the matter is settled he asks to be sent to the Florida plantation. Peter will not hear of such a thing. It does not take Frederik long, however, to guess James's secret, and he promptly complains to his uncle, who now sentences James to immediate exile.

Peter's old friend, Doctor MacPherson, is wrapped up on the subject of the future life. He comes to Peter with the proposal that whichever one of them goes first shall come back and let the other fellow know. Peter scouts the idea that such a return is possible. He rejects the compact emphatically, saying that one cannot pick the lock of heaven's gate.

Doctor MacPherson asserts that the persistent personal energy must survive this life in some form and be capable of influencing those who are left. He takes Peter's refusal so much to heart that finally Peter relents and says he will come back if he can and apologize.

The Rev. Mr. Batholommey and his wife drop in. Mrs. Batholommey buttonholes the doctor and comes right to the point. Does Peter know he is going to die? The doctor is exasperated to find that his secret has leaked out. He tries to make it clear that Peter must not know. Mrs. Batholommey thinks it is time he stepped aside and let the pastor come in.

The good lady proceeds at once to alarm Peter by suggestive remarks, but seeing that she has gone too far, diverts the subject to an equally delicate topic, the question of the parentage of William, a little boy who lives in

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the house. William's mother was Annamarie, a servant, and Peter declares that whoever the father is he is a scoundrel. Frederik always seems greatly annoyed at William's presence in the house.

William rushes in, wild with excitement, to announce that the circus procession is coming. Peter says they will go to the circus together, and gives the boy money for the tickets. William is so delighted that he declares he never laughs at Oom Peter's funny old hat, as the other boys do. He is so grateful, in fact, that he says it is too bad Oom Peter has got to die. There is a moment of general consternation, but Peter is quiet and calm and tells William kindly that they will go to the circus just the same.

Peter is left with his niece and nephew. Catherine sings an old Dutch song, and Peter listens in great contentment, smoking his old Dutch pipe. When the song is finished Peter insists that the wedding shall be held in ten days, Catherine, reluctantly consenting to marry Frederik, begs that the ceremony be put off a little longer. Peter gives her his mother's ring and tells her he was never so happy. Catherine tries to slip away, but Frederik corners her at the foot of the stairs and she allows him to kiss her. They hear Peter's pipe fall. He is dead.

Ten days later preparations are being made for the wedding, which is to take place on the morrow. James Hartman has returned to put a few things straight. Frederik is already negotiating for the sale of the property. Catherine does not want to leave her old home, and tells Frederik she is afraid she can't make him happy. She feels nevertheless that her promise to her uncle is binding.

William has been taken sick, which brings Doctor MacPherson to the house. The doctor is disturbed at the prospect of Catherine's marriage, for he understands she won't have a penny to her name unless she marries Frederik, who seems to have inherited her along with the orchids and tulips, and he offers her a home with him.

The pastor and his wife, and Colonel Lawton, Peter Grimm's lawyer, are anxious to hear a memorandum that Peter left in lieu of a will. It is quite evident that they expect substantial remembrance. To Mrs. Batholommey Peter has left a miniature of himself, to Mr. Batholommey,

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an antique watch fob, and to Colonel Lawton, his father's prayer book.

The recipients are dazed with chagrin. Daylight is fading, and they wrangle in semi-darkness. Frederik avers that his uncle gave away quite enough, and that it's lucky the old gentleman didn't live to give away any more. It is now quite dark, and there is not a sound save the ticking of the clock. Suddenly Frederik asks who has come into the room. The others have heard no one.

A lamp is lit on the table. Peter Grimm is standing near the group, half in shadow, set apart from the others in a world of his own. He is as he was in life, with the same kind smile. The others do not see him. Mr. Batholommey, taking leave, expresses the hope that Frederik will care for the parish poor as his uncle did, but Frederik tells him squarely that they need expect nothing from him.

The room is left to Peter. He looks at the array of wedding presents and shakes his head. Catherine enters. She seems to feel Peter's presence. He holds out his arms to her. She walks slowly to him. He takes her in his arms, but she is not aware of it. She goes to the stairs and then comes part way back.

Catherine. Why, I thought some one called me.

Peter. Yes, I called you. You wanted me and I came. [*She puts her hand to her brow as if confused.*] There, there, don't worry. It'll be all right. We'll arrange things very differently. I've come back to . . . Katie! Katie! Can't I make my presence known to you? There, don't cry.

Cath. Ah! Well, crying doesn't help.

Peter [*taking heart*]. Good. She hears me. [*She raises a vase of flowers and smells of them with a half smile.*] That's right, smile, smile. You haven't smiled since I died. I—mean—since I learned that there was a happier place than the world I left. We never really die. We couldn't if we tried. See the gardens. [CATHERINE *looks out toward the gardens, smiling.*] They die—but they come back all the better for it. It's a nap from which we waken rested, freshened . . . a sleep which the old fall into, tired and slow, and spring up from like children tumbling out of bed—ready to frolic through another world. There, you're happier already.

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A conflict is going on in Catherine's mind. She walks to a chair by the fireplace and sits directly in front of the fire. Peter follows her.

Peter. That's right, Katie. I want you to break that very foolish promise I asked of you. Then I'll—take the journey back in peace . . . I can't go until you do—and I . . . I long to go. Katie! Katie! Isn't my message any clearer to you?

Cath. Oh, I'm so alone.

Peter. You are not alone. I am here—and then there's your mother. I spoke of your future and of my plans for you and Frederik and, "Peter Grimm," she said, "you've overlooked the most important thing in the world—love!"

When Doctor MacPherson comes downstairs he does not hear Peter's greeting, but says that something seemed to draw him to the room.

Cath. You know, Doctor, just now I thought—I am so accustomed to hearing Oom Peter's voice in this room that sometimes I forget he is not here now—I can't get over it—I was almost sure I heard him speak! Of course, as soon as I came in—I remembered—but some one must have called me. Isn't it curious to hear your name and turn, and no one there.

Doctor MacPherson. Catherine! I have the firm conviction that in a very short time I'll hear from Peter.

Peter. I hope so.

Doctor Mac. What I want is some positive proof—some absolute test.

As soon as the doctor has gone Peter looks toward the room where James is working. Promptly the door opens and James enters, pen in hand, as though something had made him rise hurriedly from his desk. As James stands looking at Catherine she does not raise her eyes, remembering that she is to be married the next day. There is a smile on Peter's lips as he tempts James.

Peter. She is pretty . . . young and lovely . . . Look! There are kisses tangled in her hair—there where it curls . . . hundreds of them . . . Are you going to let her go? Who could resist her smiles . . . You are not going to let her go. You feel what I am saying? You won't give her up. She loves you, James, and you can't live without her——

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Catherine asks James why he went away, but he says only that he spoke too plainly to her uncle. He tells her that he and his father are going to start in business for themselves.

Cath. I'll be strange when I come back and . . . uncle gone, and you. It seems as though the home was broken up. [*Her voice trembles.*] I don't know how I'll ever have the courage to come into this house again.

James. I hope you'll be happy, Catherine.

Cath. James, he died smiling at me—thinking of me—and just before he went he gave me his mother's wedding ring and asked me to marry Frederik. I'll never forget—how happy he was when I promised.

James. Have you told Frederik that you don't love him? [*She nods. He goes closer to her.*] And he's willing to take you like that? [*Again she nods.*] Ach! Look here, Katie, I didn't mean to say a word to-day—not a word, but the minute I came out here—something made me change my mind. [PETER *smiles.*] I felt that I must talk to you. You looked so young—so—you've never had to think for yourself. You don't know what you're doing. Why, Catherine, you're making the greatest mistake possible. Your uncle was wrong to ask it. Why should you carry out his plans? You're going to be wretched for life to please a dead man who doesn't know it; or, if he does know it, you may be sure he regrets it bitterly. [PETER *approves.*]

Cath. You mustn't say that, James.

James. But I will say it. I will speak my mind. I don't care how fond you were of your uncle or how much he did for you. It wasn't right to ask this of you. It wasn't fair. The whole thing is the mistake of a very obstinate old man.

Cath. Oh!

James. Oh, I loved him, too, but he was an obstinate old man. It was the Dutch in him. [PETER *nods with marked approval.*] Do you know why I was sent away. Why I quarreled with your uncle? [CATHERINE, *almost sobbing bows her head.*] I said I loved you . . . He asked me . . . I didn't tell him because I had any hopes . . . I hadn't . . . I haven't now . . . But in spite of what I'm saying . . . I don't

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know what makes me think it . . . I could take you in my arms . . . but I do think it.

Cath. [*retreating toward* PETER]. No! James—you mustn't! Don't! . . . Don't!

Peter pushes her into James' arms without touching her, using one hand.

Cath. Oh, James! [*She fairly runs to him as if violently pushed.*] No! [*She turns back, but* JAMES *catches her.*]

James. You love me. [*He draws her to him.*]

Cath. Don't make me say that, James.

James. I will make you say it! You do love me.

Cath. No matter if I did. That wouldn't change me.

James. Catherine!

Cath. Please don't say any more . . . I can't bear it.

James. I'm not going to let you go. I won't give you up, Catherine. You love me and I couldn't live without you . . . Catherine, I won't give you up.

Cath. [*pushes* JAMES *away as if it took all her fortitude*]. You must! You must! I can't break my promise to Oom Peter. [*The outside door is slammed.*]

James. Catherine!

Cath. [*in tears, beseechingly*]. Please don't . . . Please don't.

Frederik enters and gives them a quick glance. The look of hope fades from Peter's face.

Frederik. Oh! . . . I have some of my uncle's unopened mail to go over, and then I'll join you, Hartman.

James goes back to the office. Frederik crosses the room to Catherine, takes her in his arms and kisses her on the lips. She unconsciously betrays her dislike of his touch and covers her face with her hands. Frederik wants to know what Hartman has been saying to her. She escapes from the room and he goes to the desk in a sullen temper and opens mail.

Peter. Frederik Grimm——[*He comes forward and confronts* FREDERIK.] My beloved nephew! You sit there opening my mail with a heart of stone, saying, "he's gone! And there'll be fine times ahead." But there is

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something you've forgotten—the law of reward and punishment. Your hour has come to think.

Fred. [*his eyes resting unconsciously on* PETER]. What ails me! [*He opens the letter.*]

Peter. Read!

He goes behind Frederik's chair. Frederik opens a long envelope containing a letter on blue paper and a photograph. He stares at the letter aghast.

Fred. My God! Here's luck . . . My God! What luck! . . . From that girl Annamarie to my uncle! Oh, if he had read it. [*He reads the letter.*] "Dear Mr. Grimm: I have not written because I can't help William and I'm ashamed. Don't be too hard upon me. At first I often went hungry, and then the few pennies I had saved for him were spent. Now I see that I can never hope to get him back. William is far better off with you. I wish I could see him again. Perhaps I could come in the night and no one need know."

Peter [*shaking his head*]. Oh! The pity of it!

Fred. [*suddenly feeling* PETER'S *presence*]. Who's that? . . . Who's in this room? [*Looks over his shoulder at* PETER *and then glances about.*] Strange, I could have sworn somebody was looking over my shoulder. [*He continues reading.*] "I met some one from home, and if there's any truth in the rumor of Catherine's marriage it mustn't be, Mr. Grimm, it mustn't be, not to Frederik, for Frederik is my little boy's fa——"

Frederik lays down the letter, looks furtively upstairs at the door of the child's room, and then picks up the picture that was in the envelope.

Fred. Her picture! [*He turns it over, looks at the back and reads*]: "For my little boy, from Annamarie." [*He lays the picture on the desk and bends his head, clasping it in his hands, conscience stricken for the moment.*]

Peter. Once more a spark of manhood is alight in your soul. [FREDERIK *takes up the letter and looks at it again.*] It's not too late. Nothing is ever too late. Turn back. That's right, follow your impulse. Good! Take the little boy in your arms! Go down on your knees and ask his mother's pardon, so that I can go back, still believing in you—blessing you.

Fred. [*looking about uneasily*]. Yes, what is it? [*Lays*

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down the letter and covers the picture.] Come in. . . . That's curious. I thought I heard some one at the . . . Who's at the door?

Peter. I am at the door—Peter Grimm! Annamarie is at the door, the little girl who is ashamed to come home. William is at the door—your own flesh and blood—nameless . . . Katie, sobbing her heart out. All, we are all at the door of your conscience, Frederik . . . Don't keep us waiting.

Frederik rises, deep in thought. He is greatly disturbed by the letter and his memories. He glances toward Catherine's room and then goes toward the foot of the stairs, pauses halfway and looks up.

Peter. Yes, call her! Yes! Give her back her promise.

Frederik takes a few steps more toward the stairs and then turns, Peter watching him anxiously. Frederik goes back quickly to the desk and brings his fist down on it with a resounding thud. His anger against Annamarie returns to think that she has thrust her letter between him and Catherine. He sinks into the chair.

Fred. Damn her!

He slaps his hand on the letter; takes it up, tears it across and places the pieces on the enevelope.

Peter [*he grows taller, gaining strength from his anger, and moves around the desk to face* FREDERIK.] Frederik Grimm, get up! Stand before me! Get up! [FREDERIK *starts to rise, but changes his mind.*] Get up! [FREDERIK *rises. He looks on the desk as if not knowing why he had risen.*] You shan't have my little girl. I have come back to take her from you, and you can't put me to rest! I have come back. You cannot drive me from your thoughts. I am there—— [*Pointing an accusing finger at* FREDERIK'S *head.*] I am looking over your shoulder . . . in at the window . . . I have come back . . . You are breathing me in the air . . . I am knocking at your heart. [*He brings his clenched fist down on the desk in answer to* FREDERIK'S *gesture, but despite the seeming violence of the blow it makes no sound.*] Hear me! Hear me! You shall hear me! Hear Me! [*Calls loudly.*] Hear me!

Each time Peter has called "hear me" he has repeated the blow. Then, circling the room with his eyes as he turns completely around, he calls in all directions.

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Peter. Hear me! Hear me! Will nobody hear me! Is there no one in this house that can hear me? No one? Has my journey been in vain? [*For the first time with full realization of the situation.*] Must we stand or fall by the mistakes we make here—is there no second chance in this world!

Frederik goes to the sideboard and takes a drink. Marta, the old serving woman, enters with a tray as Peter takes a lamp from a table and goes out with it. Peter watches Marta with appealing eyes and keeps looking from her to the desk, trying to make her see the letter. Finally she picks it up with the picture to clear a place for the tray. Peter goes around the desk, pointing at the letter and speaking in a hushed voice as if he were alive and didn't want Frederik to overhear.

Peter. Marta, see what you have. Look! Look quickly. The letter. Run with it to Catherine . . . The letter. . . . Look! It is the only way to know the truth in this house. [MARTA, *after setting down the tray, shifts the letter to the other hand.*] He will never speak . . . The letter. . . .

Frederik comes back quickly toward the desk. Marta relinquishes the letter as though something almost forced her to keep it.

Fred. Marta! Marta!

Marta. Coffee . . . Mineer Frederik?

Fred. Oh, yes, yes, of course. [*Sits at the desk and drops his hand on the letter.*]

Marta. No word? No letter?

Fred. Letter? From whom?

Marta. From . . . but at a time like this, I thought . . . I felt . . . that Annamarie . . . that there would be some message from my child . . . Every day I expect to hear.

Fred. No.

Peter gesticulates at the letter under Frederik's hand, but Marta courtesies and goes out. Frederik, relieved to have her go, puts the letter on an ash receiver and sets fire to it. Peter watches with tragic interest. As the letter is destroyed and the flames die out, Frederik brushes the blackened pieces into the waste basket. Peter thrusts his helpless hands about those of Frederik, following the falling fragments in despair.

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Fred. There's an end to that!

He picks up the picture and studies it, his lip curling. Peter clasps his hands, realizing how feeble his efforts are. He looks bent and worn, as if the forces which brought him back were leaving him and his long journey had been in vain. Then hope begins to creep back into his face. The circus music is faintly heard as if played by elfin horns.

The door of William's room opens. He starts to come down in his nightclothes, saying he hears the circus music. Frederik tells him gruffly to go back to bed, that the circus left town ten days before and that he has a touch of fever. William starts to obey, but has a question to ask.

William. Do you know where Annamarie is?

Fred. What? Why do you ask me? How should I know? [*He tears up the picture without letting* WILLIAM *see him do it.* WILLIAM *is going again but* PETER *motions him back to the desk.*]

Will. Mineer Frederik, where's old Mineer Grimm?

Fred. Dead.

Will. Are you sure he's dead—cause——

Fred. You'd better go to bed.

Will. Can I have a drink of water first, please. [*He starts to take up a pitcher on the table.*]

Fred. Go to bed, jongen, or you'll be punished.

As William goes slowly up to his room Frederik takes the tray and places it on the piano. He comes back to the desk and is putting out his hand toward the pieces of the picture when Peter places his hand over them. Frederik feels his presence and suddenly sees his face.

Fred. My God! . . . I thought. . . .

He recedes a step and yet another, the vision still before him. For a second he stands gazing at Peter, wipes beads of sweat from his forehead, not daring to go nearer the desk, slinks away, looking back, and leaves the room.

Peter calls to William, who responds quickly, comes downstairs and before long is replying to what Peter says.

Peter. Do you hear me?

Will. I can't really hear you. It's a dream, I suppose. Oh, Mineer Grimm, take me with you.

Peter. You're not quite ready to go with me yet, Willum, not till you can see me.

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Peter stirs the boy's recollection of the first years of his life, when he was with his mother, and some one whom he is afraid to name came often to see them. Led by Peter, he discovers the torn photograph of Annamarie and pieces it together. Catherine and Mrs. Batholommey soon discover that William is out of bed and come down. He tells them that he has been talking to Oom Peter.

Doctor MacPherson arrives abruptly, as if he had been summoned. Mrs. Batholommey tells him that William is delirious, and that he declares Peter Grimm is in the room. The doctor sees nothing remarkable in that. Presently the picture of Annamarie is noticed. Catherine wants to know who tore it up. She says that no one has been at the desk but Frederik. She discovers that a letter has been burned.

Doctor MacPherson implores Peter, if he has really come back and is there in the room, to give them some sign, if not through him, then through the boy, and, actuated by Peter, William speaks of his mother and the man who came and made her cry, but whose name he is afraid to utter.

He tells them that Peter is very unhappy because of something that is going to happen, but dares not repeat Peter's words that Catherine must not marry Frederik Grimm.

It is evident who William is afraid of when Frederik enters. Catherine accuses Frederik of hearing from Annamarie and denying that he knew where she was, and then of burning the letter. She asks why he hates William. She is going to find out the truth, she says, before she marries him.

Cath. I believe Uncle Peter Grimm was here in this room to-night.

Fred. [*not surprised*]. Oh! You, too!

Cath. I believe he has been here. He is here! [*Facing* PETER *and extending her arms.*] Oom Peter, if you can hear me now, give me back my promise—or—I'll take it back.

Peter [*smiling gently*]. I did give it back to you, my dear, but, oh, what a time I've had getting it across.

At twenty minutes of twelve the doctor is seated near the fire, writing an account of Peter's return for the

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Society for Psychical Research. Frederik comes back from a walk and tells Doctor MacPherson that he thought he saw his uncle earlier in the evening. He says he had had a strange impulse to give Kitty the house and get out, and it was when he changed his mind he saw his uncle, who gave him a terrible look. He says he has no intention of giving up Kitty, and means to sell the house. After continuing to talk nervously for a while he finally says that when he walks out of the house that night Catherine can have it.

Fred. I give her the house, because . . . well, I'm. . . .

Doctor Mac. You want to be on the safe side, in case he was there.

Doctor MacPherson tells Frederik that he means to trace Annamarie, and demands to know what Frederik means to do for William. Frederik intends to do nothing whatever for the boy. As a rich man he can't afford to recognize him.

Doctor Mac. You damned young scoundrel! Oh, what an act of charity if the good Lord took William—and I say it with all my heart. Out of all you have—not a single crumb for——

Fred. [*turning on the doctor*]. I want you to know I sweat for that money and I'm going to keep it!

Doctor Mac. You what?

Fred. Yes, I went to jail for it. Every day I've spent in this house has been spent in prison. I've been doing time.

At last Frederik goes. Catherine comes down, and Peter suddenly appears in the room, smiling happily. James comes from the office, and Catherine seeing him to the door, he kisses her good-night. William has begged to go downstairs and the doctor brings him down, wrapped in an old-fashioned Dutch patchwork quilt, and lays him on the couch by the fire. William calls out to Mineer Grimm, saying, "I see you now." William, assured that he is to go back with Peter, falls asleep happy.

The phantom circus music begins softly, and far-away voices of the clown and circus people are faintly heard. Finally Peter comes forward and holds out his arms to William, who rises from the couch and goes with him, hold-

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ing his hand. They have reached the back of the room when Doctor MacPherson comes back with some medicine, turns back the quilt, and finds a dead child on the couch.

The doors open wide and the vestibule is filled with amber light as Peter, with William on his shoulder, goes out, singing, and dances off with him up a path of faint light. An unseen hand closes the doors.

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AS A MAN THINKS*

By Augustus Thomas

First played in New York at the Thirty-ninth Street Theatre on March 11, 1913.

Argument: Mrs. Clayton, who has never been able entirely to forgive a transgression committed by her husband two years ago, is provoked by evidence of fresh unfaithfulness to act indiscreetly, thereby compromising herself. The problem is whether her husband can be convinced of her innocence, or will carry out his threat to divorce her. The play has for its theme the relative responsibility of the sexes.

It is an afternoon late in September. Doctor Seelig and his daughter Vedah are in the drawing-room of their New York home. Doctor Seelig, desiring to help a young sculptor, Julian Burrill, has invited him to the house to meet an art critic, Benjamin De Lota, who is Vedah's fiancé. Vedah is not pleased. People do not understand De Lota's air of proprietorship with her, as their engagement has not been announced, and she does not wish to have it announced just yet. She is waiting.

The first guest to arrive is Mrs. Clayton, a blonde, blue-eyed woman of delicate charm and distinction. She takes advantage of the opportunity to consult Doctor Seelig about herself. She tells him that she wakes every morning about four o'clock and can't go to sleep again; she is still worrying about her husband's misconduct at Atlantic City two years ago, and although there has been nothing in his behavior of late to excite suspicion, she thinks what he did at that time was a good deal for a wife to overlook.

Doctor Seelig agrees that, under the law, she might have

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abandoned her husband to his folly. If she had done so, he pursues, Clayton would now be an utter failure. But owing to her forbearance and love for him he has gone on advancing, developing in power. All the forces radiating from him are really due to her loyalty at a supreme moment. But, she replies, a man who has once committed a fault may do so again.

She is assuming, he returns, that men learn nothing from their mistakes, whereas he would hate to tell her how much they do learn from them, as he has discovered from professional experience. He assures her that she will not have to go through such a thing again. And, furthermore, she needs nothing for insomnia, for she has taken his point of view. He declares that he could see the care go out of her eyes and the peace come into them.

Doctor Seelig has bought two statuettes done by Burrill, and they are the chief topic of conversation when the young sculptor arrives. The model who posed for the female figure is also discussed. Burrill says that she tried acting and failed at that, but proved unusually grateful to a man who got her a chance in Antoine's Theatre. Burrill has just learned from Doctor Seelig of Vedah's engagement and is much dashed in spirit when she turns to him and asks how he happened to get Mlle. Chardenet a place in Antoine's Theatre. He replies that he was not the man.

Vedah. Then how do you know she was grateful?

Burrill. The man who got her the place—afterward committed—committed a crime and was on trial in Paris. Mimi had then become a model. She dragged us—Antoine—Riviere—me—everybody—to the courthouse in a frenzied effort to free him.

Vedah. Maybe she loved him.

Bur. I think not—simply gratitude for his interest.

Mrs. Clayton, who has been upstairs to see Mrs. Seelig, returns to the room. She recognizes a photograph of the model in street costume, and remarks that the young woman writes for the Paris papers and represents her husband's publications. Burrill is rather surprised at this intelligence. Benjamin De Lota enters. He is a tall, aggressive, and intellectual Spanish Jew of thirty-five years or so. Burrill thinks he met De Lota once in Paris. The discussion of the model is resumed. It appears that

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De Lota introduced Clayton to Mlle. Chardenet. They were at the Quat'z Arts ball, and Clayton was much struck by the girl who represented Europa. Her costume was somewhat less than that of the bronze figurine he says, for she didn't have the pipes.

Mrs. Clayton and De Lota are left together for a few minutes. It seems, he remarks, that they do meet, after all. He begs her to ask him to her house. Her husband asks him, she says, and that is enough. He replies that he will not come until she asks him. She assures him she will not do that.

De Lota. He said he wanted me to call, to know you better—— [*Smiles.*] I saw you'd told him nothing—so —I await *your* invitation.

Elinor. You were away when Frank and I first met. [DE LOTA *nods.*] I suppose all husbands ask their wives if they've ever cared for any one else—— [*She leaves the fireplace and goes to the window.*]

De L. [*pause*]. And you said——?

Elinor. I said no. Smile if you wish but—— I hadn't loved any one as I loved him.

De L. Naturally.

Elinor. So what I said was true.

De L. By the feminine standard, yes.

She says she always disliked his talk of feminine standards and masculine standards. In morals, she says, there is just one standard. She also dislikes his catlike cruelty. She says that when he plays the piano it is like a cat walking on the keys.

De L. There were times, however, when you asked me to play.

Elinor. There are times when I like cats.

De L. Elinor! [*He starts impulsively toward her.*]

Elinor [*avoiding him*]. No——

De L. [*regarding her with admiration*]. Damn it—we'd have been happy together—you and I.

Elinor. No.

De L. The history of my people supports me.

Elinor. Spanish history?

De L. Jewish history.

She forbids him to talk to her in that strain, and says that she will never be alone with him again. In that case,

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he says, he must tell her something now. She forbids him, and commands him to play the piano, or she will leave the room. He laughs and goes to the piano which he plays brilliantly and with passion. Doctor Seelig comes back with Vedah and Burrill, and a few minutes later Mr. Clayton arrives. Elinor at once draws her husband's attention to the statuettes and asks if he recognizes the model.

Clayton [*playfully*]. I'd like to.

Elinor. Mimi Chardenet.

She says he must remember. It was the girl who appeared as Europa at the Quat'z Arts ball. Clayton glances swiftly at De Lota. His wife asks him to look at the photograph. She says that Mr. Burrill was inclined to doubt that the young lady represented her husband's magazines. Clayton returns evasively that the arrangement was discussed but never completed. To relieve the situation, De Lota talks about Mlle. Chardenet, for whom he says he obtained a chance in Antoine's Theatre.

Vedah inquires quickly when that was, and learns that it was nine or ten years ago, before the girl posed as a model. Mrs. Clayton, upon leaving, remarks to De Lota that he must tell her more of the girl and asks him to call. Vedah and Mrs. Clayton go out. A few minutes later Vedah finds herself alone with Burrill again and turns to him in alarm.

Vedah. He is the man—I saw your face when he said he had introduced this girl to Antoine.

Bur. Antoine's name startled me—that was all—and——

Vedah. You thought you'd seen *him* in Paris.

Bur. Probably did—many times.

Vedah. You think you saw him in that courtroom—on trial for a crime.

Bur. [*evasively*]. No—no.

Vedah. The man on trial had spoken to Antoine for the girl.

Bur. A dozen men may have done that. Engagements in the theatre require many introductions.

Vedah. I read the doubt in your heart. You're not the conventional coward that most men are—tell me. I am promised to *marry* Benjamin De Lota—doesn't that mean anything to you?

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Bur. Mean anything! [*He starts impulsively toward* VEDAH, *stops and after a moment's effort at self-control says calmly and tenderly.*] I love you!

Vedah inhales quickly, her glance falls before Burrill's, she turns irresolutely toward the room into which De Lota has gone. There is a pause.

About a month later, one evening at the Clayton's after dinner, Burrill gets a chance to question De Lota and asks him if he was in Paris eight years ago. De Lota says that he has been going to Paris every year for many years.

Bur. Did you ever visit the Cour d'Assizes?

De L. Occasionally—if some interesting case were on——

Bur. I remember one very interesting case—a husband punished his wife—and also her lover—by imprisonment.

De L. The French law *has* that absurd possibility.

Bur. The lover was sentenced to a year's imprisonment.

De L. He was fortunate—the court in its discretion might have given him two years.

Bur. You are more minutely informed on the subject than the average American.

De L. I am more minutely informed on most subjects than the average American. I know somewhat of character—of men's temperaments and motives, Mr. Burrill. And your interest in my life at Paris is very serviceable just now.

Bur. Indeed!

De L. Indeed yes. I've been at a loss to understand the change in Miss Seelig's deportment toward myself. I was charging it to your superior attraction. I see it was due to your power of insinuation.

Burrill replies that he avoided discussing De Lota's life in Paris. They are interrupted by Mrs. Clayton's return to the room. She is about to start for the opera with her guests while Clayton remains at home for a business conference. De Lota and Elinor look at a libretto of Aïda, and she asks her husband to mark a passage in it. Before Elinor starts Clayton reproaches her for sulking. She renews their quarrel over Mlle. Chardenet.

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Elinor. You've admitted you went to the woman's room.

Clay. Admitted nothing. I candidly told you I had gone there—*told* you in order that you might know all.

Elinor. All that you were willing to tell.

Clay. I can't keep pace with your imagination.

Elinor. Your wish to have me "know all" is six months after the fact, and when her photograph accidentally exposed you.

She reminds him of his promises after the affair at Atlantic City.

Clay. I didn't promise to stagnate. I'm a publisher with a newsman's curiosity about the world I live in.

Elinor. And what of a woman's curiosity?

Clay. Colossal! But not privileged. Curiosity of that kind in a woman is idle and immoral.

He claims a license for transgressions, she says, and denies it to her. He replies that the proposition may be stated that way. After a defiant pause she informs him that he is mistaken. De Lota enters with other guests and they leave the room. Clayton sees the libretto lying on a table and calls Elinor back to give it to her. She starts off with De Lota to pick up her friend, Mrs. Underwood, on the way, and the other guests go in another car.

Vedah calls Burrill's attention to the arrangement. She has heard that De Lota has called on Mrs. Clayton very frequently of late. She asks him if he has investigated De Lota's past to see if he was the man who was sentenced in Paris. Burrill thinks that would not be a manly thing for him to do, even against a rival. She insists that he must do something about it for her sake, but he tells her that De Lota's record does not matter as he, not De Lota, is going to marry her.

The Clayton's little boy, Dick, is ill and Doctor Seelig is sent for. He comes straight from the house of Mrs. Underwood, who was taken ill suddenly and was unable to go to the opera with Mrs. Clayton. Judge Hoover, Mrs. Clayton's father, comes to discuss a libel suit in which he is defending his son-in-law. The alleged libellous article in one of Clayton's publications was based on information furnished by De Lota. Judge Hoover dislikes De Lota and declares that he will be sure to get into some dirty scandal sooner or later.

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That very evening, he says, on his way to Clayton's house, he passed De Lota's side street hotel and saw him sneaking in with a girl. Clayton thinks he is mistaken. Judge Hoover is positive. He says he called out to De Lota. The girl scooted in ahead and he did not see what she was like. She dropped something, however. He thought it was a fan, but when he reached the spot he saw it was a libretto. Judge Hoover gets it from his overcoat pocket. It is a libretto of Aïda. Clayton takes it savagely.

Clay. [*in sudden anger, throws book*]. The dog! Damn him—damn both of them.

Hoover. What is it? See here, who's with Dick?

Clay. Not his mother—no! [*Points to libretto on the floor.*] Marked. *I* did that myself, not an hour ago, and gave it to her.

Clayton rushes from the house. Hoover tells Doctor Seelig that Clayton has just received disquieting news, and he thinks the family would like to be left to themselves. Doctor Seelig says he cannot leave his patient, and goes upstairs again to the little boy. Elinor returns to the house in a state of intense excitement. She asks her father not to leave her.

Hoov. I won't. But I'm not only your father—I'm an attorney—a counsellor. Let me have the truth, Elinor. The door was locked?

Elinor. De Lota locked it in sheer playfulness. I was begging him to open it when Frank came.

Hoov. But why there at all? Why in De Lota's rooms?

Elinor. Just plain madness. Twice at dinner the conversation got onto Mr. Burrill's sculpture. Frank has had an affair with Burrill's model. [*Rises and walks. Throws her cloak on the table.*]

Hoov. When? Not since the trouble of Atlantic City?

Elinor. This year in Paris—I've made him almost admit it. De Lota introduced them. To-night when we found the Underwoods couldn't go—and we were alone for the evening, De Lota and I—he proposed seeing some Japanese carvings he has in his rooms.

Hoov. But, Elinor—you're not an infant. A proposal of that kind is only a mask for lawlessness.

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Elinor. I *am* lawless. *He* claims the right to follow *his* fancy, and does follow it—my right is equal. He introduced me to this very woman on the Boulevard—but I didn't strike her, did I?

Hoov. Did Frank strike De Lota?

Elinor. Like a cheap bully. [*The front door is slammed violently.*]

CLAYTON *enters, pale with excitement.*

Clay. You came *here*, did you?

Elinor. Why shouldn't I? You haven't made it such a sanctified temple that I'm unworthy to enter it.

Clay. [*to* HOOVER]. She can't stay.

Hoov. [*going to* CLAYTON]. See here, Frank. You're in no state of mind to make any important decision.

Clay. The facts make the decision——

Hoov. You haven't got the facts?

Clay. I've got all I can stand and we won't vulgarly discuss them. I decline to live with an adultress.

Elinor. I'm not that—but I am an indignant and cruelly neglected woman.

Clay. She's your daughter. Now take her from my house or—I'll have the servants do it! [*Strides into the music-room.*]

Elinor [*impetuously*]. Coward! His house——

She says that Frank consulted with her and her father on every step in his success, and that in every tight place it was her father's legal advice that saved him. And now he turns her out like a common woman onto the street. Her father tells her to come with him, and says it will not be long before they can get Frank to believe them.

Doctor Seelig comes downstairs and meets them in the hall. He asks Judge Hoover to let him speak to Elinor alone. Elinor says she cannot leave without seeing her boy, but Doctor Seelig cautions her to be calm. She answers hysterically that she can't be calm and leave her boy. She has never neglected him. She falls weeping into a chair. Clayton comes in. Doctor Seelig pleads with him to show forbearance, but Clayton declares he will not begin the living hell of life with a dishonored woman.

Elinor [*rising defiantly*]. I'm not dishonored. I only claim the right you *exercise* for yourself to go where life

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interests me. If it's honorable and moral for you—it's equally honorable and equally moral for me.

Clay. Every right you may possibly claim you have fully earned by your visit to Ben De Lota's room. I'm going to make your equality complete. From now on you'll protect yourself, and you'll earn the substance your vanity squanders.

Doctor Seelig declares that she shall not leave her home. The life of his patient demands that his mother shall be with him, the doctor says, and the little boy cannot be moved for several days. Clayton says he will go to his club.

After the break with her husband Mrs. Clayton goes to visit the Seeligs', taking Dick with her. Clayton has instructed his attorney to bring a suit for divorce. Judge Hoover, in preparation for defending his daughter, brings Ben De Lota, who is to be a witness for her. Judge Hoover hopes that it may be possible to persuade Clayton to let Elinor get the divorce, as it would be better for the boy to have the blame fixed on his father than on his mother. He believes his daughter is not guilty, but says the case is against her.

Elinor [*to* DE LOTA]. You know I'm not a guilty woman.

De Lota I do—but your father is right. We must face the situation as it is. I love you, Elinor. [*Comes to her.*]

Elinor [*recoiling*]. Don't say that to me.

Hoov. My dear, I've brought Mr. De Lota here that, unpleasant as it is, he *might* say it—in my hearing.

She utters an exclamation of revulsion, covering her face. The only action that she will take, she says, will be to defend herself if her husband brings suit, and if she loses it she will live so that some day he will see that he was mistaken. But Judge Hoover thinks that under these circumstances the custody of the boy might be awarded to Clayton.

Elinor insists upon telling Mrs. Seelig the cause of the trouble between herself and Frank, in spite of the protests of De Lota, who says that he has a tacit engagement to Vedah. Elinor informs Mrs. Seelig that she deserves all her trouble because she really did go to De Lota's rooms.

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Elinor. I was crazy—rebellious—vengeful—striking back—bitterly resentful of deceit Frank had been newly guilty of. I went as much in the name of all women despitefully treated as I did in assertion of my own freedom. And then—I came to my senses. I'm not guilty or I wouldn't be in your home.

Doctor Seelig comes in. He has already heard that Clayton is going to bring suit. Mrs. Seelig declares it is unbearable that men should claim such privileges as they do, and set up a double standard of morality. It is a man's world, she says. Doctor Seelig thinks it is a pretty wise world. Elinor asks him if he thinks she should be made to suffer for what she did. He thinks she does suffer. He does not say that her offence is less forgivable than Frank's was; she has his pity, but he will not lie to her. Mrs. Seelig warns Elinor not to ask a Jew if she is more guilty than her husband.

Mrs. Seelig. Our ancient law—from which all your ideas come. A man's past was his own. *He* was not forbidden as many wives as he wanted, but if a poor girl had made a mistake and concealed it from these lords of creation, she was stoned to death unless she was the daughter of a priest—in which case she was to be burnt alive. It's always been a man's world.

Seelig. Elinor. [*Pause.*] Do you hear that rattle of the railroad?

Elinor. Yes.

Seel. All over this great land thousands of trains run every day starting and arriving in punctual agreement because this is *a woman's world.* The great steamships, dependable almost as the sun—a million factories in civilization—the countless looms and lathes of industry—the legions of labor that weave the riches of the world—all—all move by the mainspring of man's faith in woman—man's *faith.*

Elinor. I want *him* to have faith in me.

Seel. This old world hangs together by love.

Mrs. S. Not man's love for woman.

Seel. No—nor woman's love for man, but by the love of both—for the children.

Elinor. Dick.

Seel. Men work for the children because they believe

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the children are—their own—*believe*. Every mother *knows* she is the mother of her son or daughter. Let her be however wicked, no power on earth can shake that knowledge. Every father believes he is a father only by his faith in woman. Let him be however virtuous, no power on earth can strengthen in him a conviction greater than that faith. There is a double standard of morality because upon the golden basis of woman's virtue rests the welfare of the world.

Burrill informs De Lota that he is going to give him a chance to retire from the field without being exposed. Miss Seelig, he says, believes that De Lota has served time in a penitentiary. He explains how it was that De Lota himself gave Vedah a hint of this by saying that he had obtained a place for Mlle. Chardenet in Antoine's Theatre, as she already knew that the girl's benefactor had been in prison.

Burrill's own opinion is that he saw De Lota sentenced, though he tried to conceal his belief from Vedah. He foresees that Vedah will question De Lota. He knows, he says, that De Lota is unworthy to marry her. The telephone rings.

De L. Wait. [*Goes quickly to telephone and takes receiver from its hook.*] They may not come. [*Pause.*] I have served a year in a French prison. Captain Dreyfus served even longer for the same prejudice.

Bur. Your crime was proven.

De L. I'm as good as you, Mr. Burrill, or any bachelor that spends his several years in Paris. That imprisonment was a decoration.

Burr. Rot!

De L. I'm not a male *ingénue*. Doctor Seelig knows I've had my wild oats and I'll make a clean breast of it—my sufferings for my race will not be held against me. Vedah Seelig is a Jewess, remember, and——

A moment later Doctor Seelig enters. He answered the telephone from a branch upstairs and overheard the words which he calls De Lota's confession. Burrill goes, and De Lota tries to defend his position. He says that an obsolete law was dug up to persecute him because he was a foreigner and a Jew.

Seel. What law?

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De L. Imprisoning a man on the complaint of a woman's husband.

Seel. We are fortunate to hear it.

Doctor Seelig was not the only one to overhear De Lota on the wire, as it appears presently when Clayton enters precipitately and accuses De Lota of coming to the house to see his wife. Doctor Seelig gets rid of De Lota and explains how he happened to be there. He asks Clayton to regard marriage for the moment from the point of view of a civil covenant. Clayton's position is then that of a thief, a confessed embezzler. On the sacred side he is twice guilty—guilty of immoral conduct and of goading a good woman to a desperate act. Clayton laughs ironically at his plea.

ELINOR *enters with* JUDGE HOOVER.

Elinor. Frank? [*Extends her hand pleadingly.*]

Clay. Well?

Elinor. I'm in the dust—forgive me.

Seel. [*in undertone*]. Judge—— [*Starts out,* HOOVER *following.*]

Clay. [*checking them*]. No—none of that. Let's not contrive any interview of repentance.

Elinor. You—you're not going to drag the—whole story into the courts?

Clay. I'm going to—[*pause*]—do only what is necessary.

Elinor [*sits—speaks with effort at control*]. *As we forgive*—those that trespass against *us*——

Clay. It's too late to adjust matters with a few appropriate quotations.

Clayton refers to De Lota's visit to the house, saying he has come to take Dick out of the muck. Judge Hoover thinks it would smooth matters out to explain to Clayton that Elinor and De Lota were friends before Clayton ever came to New York. Elinor is too late to check him. Clayton wants to know why she and De Lota should have pretended they were not acquainted. Elinor says she was considering De Lota's feelings, as they had been engaged before she met Clayton.

Elinor. Father objected on account of De Lota's race —and—father forbade me ever to speak of it in his hearing. When you and I met I was still over-sensitive about it and——

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Clay. [*furiously*]. No, by God! It won't do. You can't square it. I see it now. I've been a dupe for years and years.

Elinor. I never saw him again until you brought him home.

Clay. Don't, I'm through with it. [*Going.*

Elinor. *Frank*—don't go—wait! See Dick!

Clay. [*turning*]. Dick.

Elinor. You must see your boy.

Clay. *My* boy! How do I *know* he's my boy?

[ELINOR *and* SEELIG *both exclaim.*]

Elinor. Oh!

Seel. Frank!

Clay. You've lived a lie about that blackguard all along until I trapped you in his room.

Elinor. But Dick—our baby Dick. For God's sake, Frank, don't say a thing like that!

Clay. Why not, if it's here—here—[*striking forehead*]—and hell itself can't burn it out.

Seel. [*at the door*]. Frank—it's the boy.

Clay. No—no! [*Turns and goes rapidly out by the other door.*]

Enter DICK.

Elinor [*to* SEELIG]. What have I done? I didn't know—I didn't know.

Dick [*to* ELINOR]. Where's papa?

Elinor [*with a heartbroken cry*]. Ah! [*Kneels and takes* DICK *in her arms.*] My boy—my boy—— [*Brushes back his hair.*] Our baby—boy. [*Kisses and embraces him hysterically, sobbing.*]

Christmas Eve finds Clayton alone with the servants in his big house. He is in poor health and has sent for Doctor Seelig. Judge Hoover and Elinor come to see him and will not be turned away. Elinor has come to plead with her husband not to let their difference put a blight on Dick's Christmas. He has been talking for days about his tree and hanging up his stocking by the big fireplace at home.

Clayton mutters that she is talking drivel, and asks why she hasn't brought suit against him as she promised to do if he would drop his action.

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Elinor. *I* refuse. There's nothing left me to live for but my baby and his happiness. I won't—I won't bring an accusation against his father. [CLAYTON *moves away wearily to mantel*—ELINOR *rises.*] You *are* his father and only your wish to crush me makes you pretend to doubt it. I've forfeited your love, I know—I'm not here to plead against that—but to avoid any scar I can for the boy's heart. I want you to let Dick come here to-morrow. [CLAYTON *moves impatiently.*] Not with *me*—with Miss Doane. I want you to see him—and take him in your arms——

Clay. [*shakes head*]. No——

Hoov. [*with some indignation*]. Whatever he is—he's a child, and for seven years this was his home.

Clay. There'll be other anniversaries. He may as well learn now.

Elinor. No—not now. When he's old enough to understand I'll *tell* him—the truth.

Clay. What is the truth?

Elinor. That his mother—was a foolish woman who thought her husband didn't understand her. That his father punished her out of all proportion to her offence, but only as *women* must expect punishment.

Clay. [*sneering*]. I know—because *men* are brutes.

Elinor. Because—God has put into woman's keeping a trust—of which no one—neither husbands nor fathers tell them truly—about which the world in its vain disputes of equality misleads them—of which they learn only through their own suffering.

Clay. [*leaving* ELINOR *and going to* HOOVER]. This kind of thing is what I try to escape.

He will not even let Dick spend his Christmas morning there. She reminds him that he used at first to ask after Dick every day, until he took this cruel pose that the boy is not his.

The butler enters, and Elinor and her father, learning that Mr. Burrill and Vedah are in the hall, go out quickly by the dining-room door. Burrill tells Clayton that he is going to start on a trip abroad in a few days, and also that he and Vedah have just been married. They are saying that her parents do not know yet when Mrs. Seelig arrives.

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Upon seeing Burrill, Mrs. Seelig remarks sternly to Vedah that she knows her father's wishes. The news of the marriage is the more of a surprise as Doctor Seelig and his wife had wanted Vedah to "sacrifice her life to teach the idea of one God." She cannot see why her daughter should marry secretly and run away. Vedah takes the responsibility on herself. Burrill is going to spend a year in Paris, where she did not care to trust a sculptor for so long.

Mrs. Seelig makes an onslaught on Clayton. She reminds him that on Christmas little Dick has always found his stocking by the fireplace in the music-room. She tells him that she has sent a tree to the house, and that he must let them send Dick over. Judge Hoover comes back, and Mrs. Seelig leaves them. Judge Hoover wants to make the point that in the case of Elinor's girlish affair with De Lota the attraction was due to her craze for music.

When Doctor Seelig comes he finds the room close, and opens the window which Clayton had shut to keep out the sound of the church bells. Clayton asks if the doctor has any respect for the Christ idea. Doctor Seelig has not great regard for the ideas that distinguish various creeds, and has even outgrown the creed he was brought up in, but he respects "the man," he says, for he knew the essence of life. His answer was: "As a man thinketh." That reply, Doctor Seelig says, answers everything. He asks Clayton to relax.

Seel. [*tapping his own forehead*]. It's this. Why, I have patients—business men—who are always tied up like a wet fishing line—sleep that way. Do you know why that wrinkle is between your eyes?

Clay. I'm sick, that's why.

Seel. Because the wrinkle's in your mind. That coat I took from the floor said mental wrinkles, "As a man thinketh," my dear Frank. [*Pause.*] What is it now—come?

Clay. *You* don't have to ask, do you?

Seel. I do ask.

Clay. Just to keep my mind on it, I suppose?

Seel. No—I want to hear you talk about it.

Clay. My mind will be all right, I'll be all right, when that damned dog is dead in hell!

Seel. [*pause*]. You hate him pretty bitterly, don't you?

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Clay. I hate him the best I know how.

Seel. You know what good hating does to the hater?

Clay. You mean to me?

Seel. [*nodding*]. To everybody. Kills him.

Clay. Kills him?

[SEELIG *nods.*]

Seel. [*pause*]. Hate generates one of the deadliest poisons in nature. I've had trouble in my time saving a baby that had nursed milk from the breast of an angry woman. You've heard of the bite of a blue gum negro being poison.

Clay. Knew a man who lost his thumb that way.

Seel. Well, it is no more poisonous than the bite of a red gum negro, or the bite of a red gum white man, if either of them gets angry enough; the blue gum negro is just a little nearer the animal and gets mad quicker, that's all. Now, you lie here with this grouch of yours and you generate constantly an internal poison. I haven't any medicine that can beat that.

Clay. When I get so much of it in me that I shoot that cur, as I shall some day, they'll call it murder.

Doctor Seelig says he used to get pretty angry himself sometimes when he was younger, but thinks that he did it mainly to show off. Clayton, he declares, is influenced by public opinion. De Lota did not do any more than Clayton would have done, he thinks, if he had met an old sweetheart when she thought she was neglected.

Seel. See here, Frank, you were neglecting her. He did what nine men out of ten would do. He knows the price that's being paid, and I know that he'd walk around the Belt Line to-night in the snow, barefooted, to have the record closed.

Clay. Suppose you think I ought to hunt him up and shake hands with him?

Seel. No—don't think you should ever see him again, even mentally; but it doesn't need murder to acquire that attitude. I want you to be big enough to dismiss it. That's why I quote this carpenter prophet of Nazareth—a truth that took me a postgraduate course to learn and twenty-five years to demonstrate—He found out by himself. He said in one of his first sermons: "*Forgive*, and ye shall be forgiven; *give* and it shall be given unto you,

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good measure pressed down, shaken together and running over shall men give unto your bosom."

Clay. Oh, that religious elation——

Seel. It wasn't religion He was preaching, but a good working rule of life. This precept of good will—people regard the words "Good will" as interchangeable with "Peace," but will is active, good will is a constructive force. I've seen sick people get well merely through two or three hearty good wishers rooting for them. I've figured it out that there's an influence circulating through all men when they'll permit it, just as the current through that lamp goes through all other lamps in this house. Stop it in the man by avarice or cupidity, divert it by envy, *turn it back* by hate, and something goes wrong with the machinery. "Give and it shall be given unto you."

Clay. You take Him too literally, Doctor.

Seel. The mistake is not taking Him *literally enough.* I've cured many taking that sermon literally. [*Sits beside* CLAYTON *on his couch.*] I find what is on the patient's mind. Generally some hate or fear—sometimes regret or remorse—then I try to show the patient that yesterday is yesterday, that his past life doesn't concern him any more than last year's snow. If I can get a man looking ahead—hopeful—anxious to get on the job—why, he's cured.

Clay. [*doggedly*]. I'll look ahead when I get even with this fellow.

Seel. Well, say you've got even—that you've dealt him some deadly blow, irreparably injured him or his happiness! What then? My dear Frank, there is nothing so disappointing as a satisfied revenge.

Clayton insists that he cannot get up and work at something merely in order to forget what he is thinking of all the time. Doctor Seelig asks him to suppose that he were working to save somebody. And whom would he save if he had the choice? Would it not be Dick? And would not the second person be Dick's mother?

Clay. She's made her bed.

Seel. Yes, but after you've made beds there's something more to do than lie in them. After a reasonable time you are to get up and get *out* of them.

Clayton asks how he can overlook what she has done,

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Seel. Yes—overlook what she's done. She wasn't perfect—nobody is. She makes one mistake—with you it's final. You don't judge any one else that way. I've seen you throwing little Dick the baseball, teaching him to hold it and not to break his chubby fingers—standing two yards from him—drop and drop and drop it. You didn't get tired—you were developing the boy. Now the assumption is that Elinor came to you with her character fully developed; but, my dear old friend, character never stops developing if we are in the right line. There's still the perfecting of a fine woman. You want something to do—do that.

Clayton says he may tell her that he has forgiven her—but that he is through with it just the same. Doctor Seelig's answer is that he will not carry lies to her. He asks Clayton to come out for a ride with him in his car, and goes to the telephone to let his wife know that he will not be at home for dinner. Mrs. Seelig answers him, and then Elinor speaks to him to ask if he remembered to transmit the present which Dick sent to his father.

Doctor Seelig takes a small package from his pocket and hands it to Clayton, who opens it and finds in it a photograph, over which he bends, deeply moved. He suddenly asks Doctor Seelig not to hang up the receiver, and then adds angrily that he has a few things to say to his wife. [*Protesting.*] Not in that mood, Frank.

Clay. It's all a frame up to torture me. [*Takes' phone —speaks angrily.*] Hello! [*Anger goes from his face—whole manner changes—tone becomes gentle and affectionate.*] Dick, that you, Dick? [*Pause.*] Yes, I hear you—[*Pause.*] I *got* it, my boy, thank you—[*Pause.*] *You bet* I like it—[*Pause.*] The *tree?* [*Pause.*] Yes, by the big fireplace—[*Pause.*] To-night? Well—[*Pause*] Then—[*Pause and effort.*] Tell her to *come—with you!*

[*Drops 'phone on table, receiver hanging toward the floor. Sinks into chair face down on elbow, sobbing.* SEELIG *walks to 'phone, hangs up receiver.* CLAYTON *reaches out his right hand blindly.* SEELIG *takes it—holds it reassuringly and firmly. Gives* CLAYTON *a tonic slap on back and helps him rise.* CLAYTON *walks back to chair facing the fire.*]

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Seel. [*solemnly*]. Frank! There is one moment in a woman's life—dazed by chloroform—wrung with pain—when her physician hears her speak the name of the man for whom she suffers. [*Pause.*] Every vestige of that doubt you uttered in my library must be effaced from your heart. [*Rings push button.*]

Clayton says that he did not invent the doubt. The butler enters to announce that a gentleman is calling to see Mr. Clayton. Doctor Seelig tells Clayton that the visitor is the man he hates. Clayton declares with an oath that he will not see him. Doctor Seelig is expostulating with him when De Lota enters. Doctor Seelig tells De Lota to speak only when he bids him, and then ask when, before Clayton introduced him, he had last seen Mrs. Clayton. De Lota says it was eight years before. Clayton observes that one lie more or less is nothing.

Seel. Where were you *eight* years ago?

De L. In France.

Seel. [*sternly*]. Where!

De L. [*pause*]. The prison *de La Sante*, in Paris.

Seel. For how long a term?

De L. One year.

Seel. I asked you to bring your prison paper of discharge. [De Lota *hands paper to* Seelig. Seelig *regards paper and displays it to* Clayton.] You read French—numerals at least. The date is there.

Clay. [*after a glance*]. Well?

Seel. Also Mr. Burrill was in the courtroom when Mr. De Lota was sentenced. [*Pause.*] To show this paper, to admit in your hearing—this fact has not been an easy thing for Benjamin De Lota to do. He does it at my urging—the appeal of one *Jew*—to another *Jew*. He is going—he lives by writing criticism. His signature to an article has a money value—and despite these personal mistakes, I believe his influence in print is wholesome. He leaves your magazines. Of course, he can't expect their recommendation, but I have *promised* him—*your silence.*

Clay. [*pause*]. I shan't—[*pause*]—interfere.

[Seelig *turns*—De Lota *goes.*]

Clayton says he has been a brute. Doctor Seelig tells him that Dick is coming, and also his mother, and says he will go. Clayton would rather have him stay. There is

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some troubling news that Clayton has for Doctor Seelig. It is about Vedah's marriage. At this moment Dick enters the room, followed by Elinor and Mrs. Seelig. The reconciliation is completed. Mrs. Seelig craves her husband's forgiveness for Vedah and Burrill.

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